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# **Writing Mobility**

## **British Working Holiday Makers in Australia**

**Nick Clarke**

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. School of Geographical Sciences. Date submitted: April 2004.

78,508 words

## ABSTRACT

During 2000-1, over 75,000 12-month working holiday visas were issued by the Commonwealth Government of Australia, almost 40,000 to British citizens between the ages of 18 and 30. Based on quantitative research methods, many studies exist which tell us much about the economic implications of these figures. But the programme aims “to promote international understanding” (visa application form 1150), and few studies have focused on social and cultural implications, in part because the language of audit fits poorly such dimensions. This dissertation, then, draws on two modes of research practice – political economy, and an ethnography influenced by Geertz’s (1973) thick description and Burawoy’s (1998) extended case method – to consider three research questions. How has it come to this, that on any one day we may find almost 50,000 working holiday makers working and holidaying in Australia? What are the implications of such working holidays for their makers? And what are the implications of this working holiday maker presence for Australia and Australians? From these considerations, when filtered through current debates among tourism, globalisation, transnationalism and mobility theorists, two broad points emerge. First, working holidays can do much for their makers, enabling personal development (in the form of strong narratives and modern skills) and some international understanding. Second, transnational corporeal mobility is neither unlimited and complete nor ever-expanding in linear fashion (as parts of the literature sometimes imply). Taken together, these two broad points raise another question (who gets to travel?), focus attention on how we currently write mobility (*write about* mobility, but also *inscribe* mobility), and point towards recent and future research on rights to mobility, travelling mentalities, and tourism of the everyday.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For Kath – my nurse, my editor, my love.

With heartfelt thanks to my parents – teachers in every positive sense, Adrian Passmore for teaching me to read critically, Nigel Thrift for teaching me to think differently and write confidently, Andrew Arnold – my surgeon of steady hands and touching sympathy, and Clive Barnett, Mark McGuinness, Mike Crang and Paul Cloke whose close reading and distant perspectives inform the better parts of this final draft.

Map A is reproduced from Chambers J (1999) *Australia: A Traveller's History, Second Edition* (Moreton-in-Marsh, The Windrush Press) by kind permission from the publishers.



## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the text has been submitted for any other degree. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol. The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED:  .

DATE: 16/04/04

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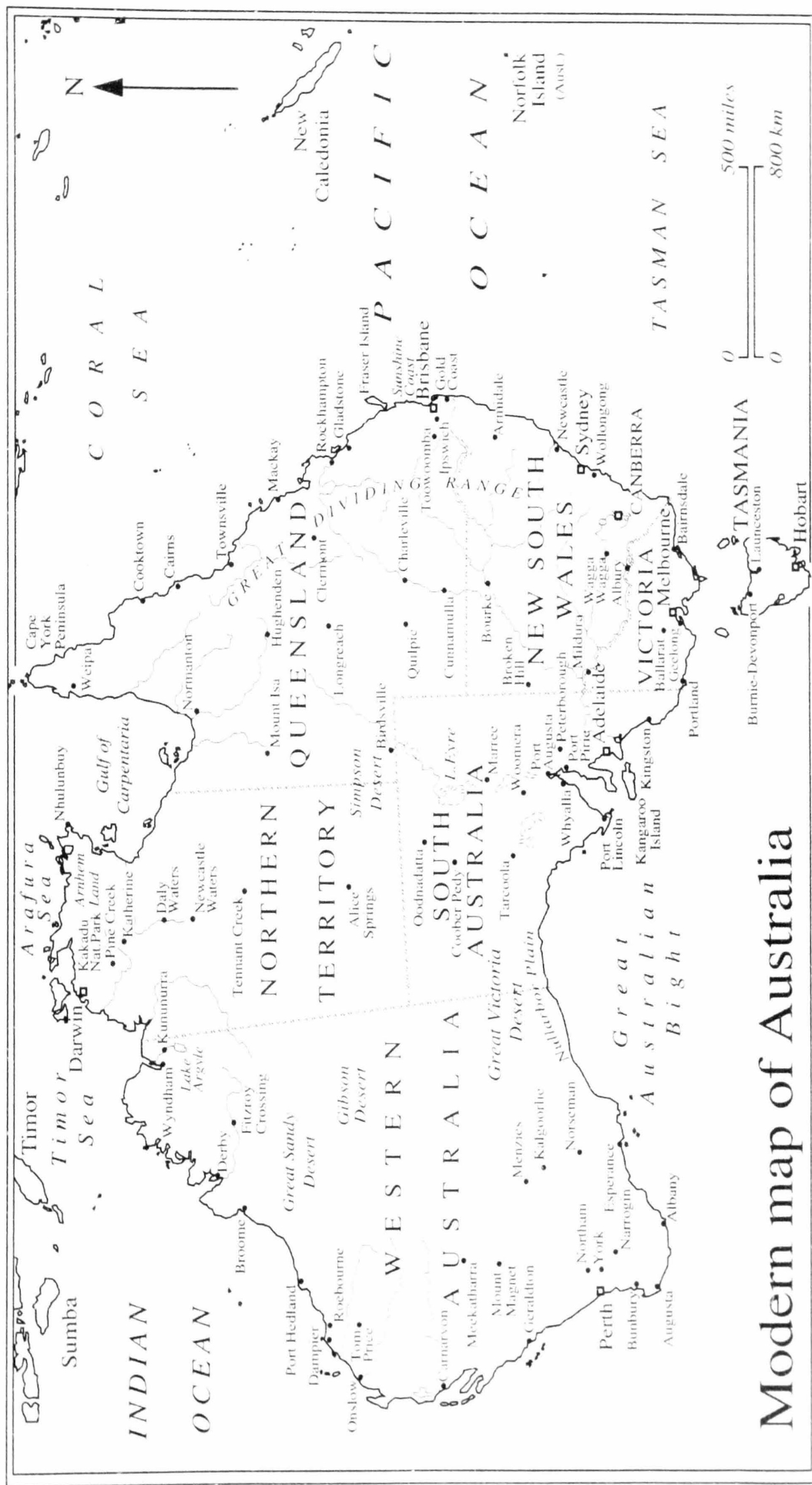
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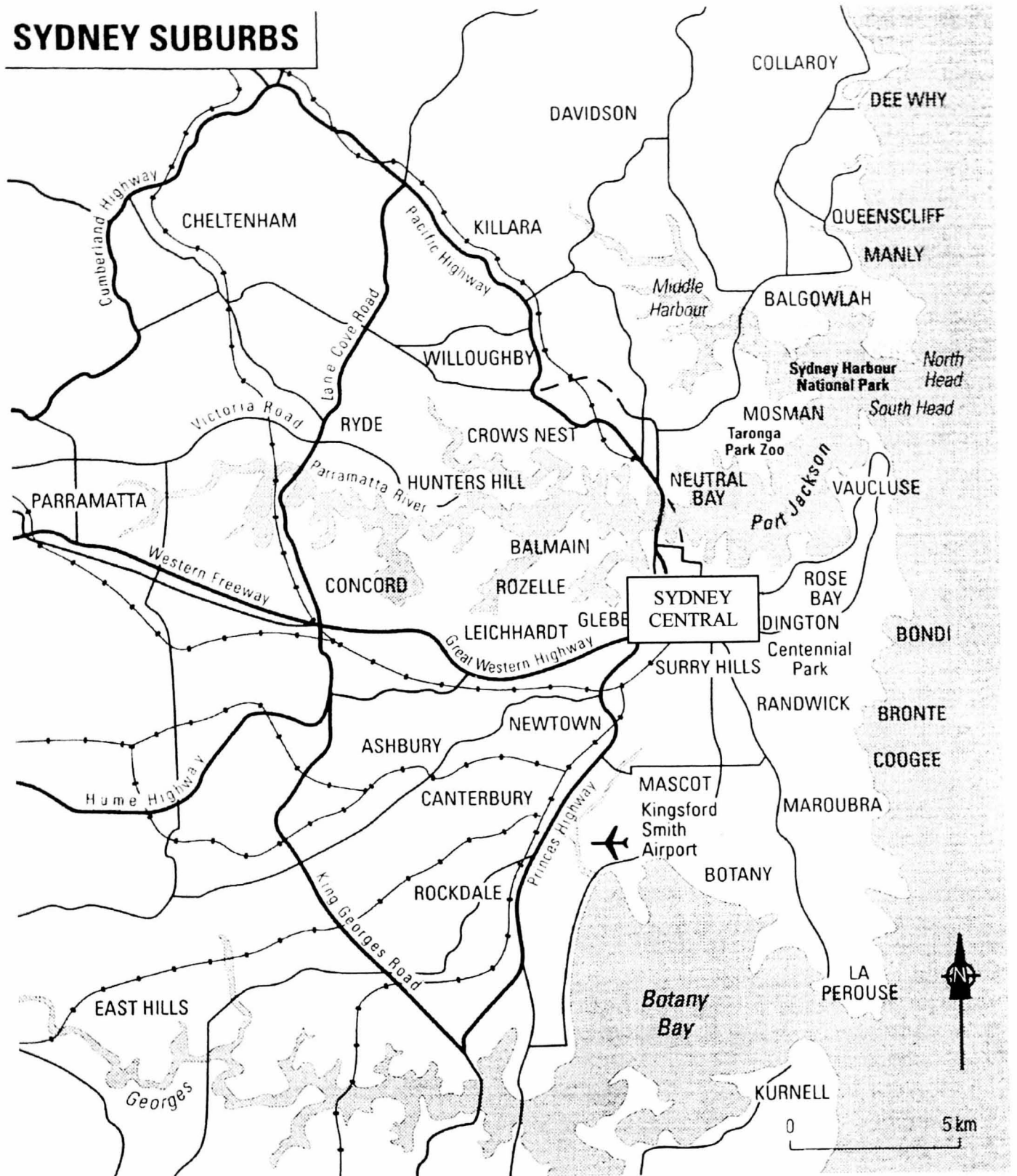
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Modern map of Australia

Map A: Australia

## SYDNEY SUBURBS



**Map B: Sydney**

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The dissertation

This dissertation is about two related things. Most immediately, it is about British working holiday makers (WHMs) in Australia. I write from the assumption that mass holiday making today is no poor relation to exclusive holiday making of the past, but rather remains for many a positively productive process. I argue that working holidays can do much for their makers, facilitating personal development and international understanding, encouraging strong narrative-based self-identities, and promoting such modern skills as tolerance of difference and change. Space, time, and technologies are important themes in this argument. It is important that WHMs put geographical distance between themselves and disciplining home life. It is important that WHM spaces are weakly circumscribed. And it is important that WHMs are more welcome in some parts of Sydney than others. As for time, many WHMs imagine that when they leave Britain for Australia, they also leave fast time for slow time. Working holidays clearly do provide their makers with time for reflection. But WHM rhythms are often 24-hour, and this, along with WHM temporary and short-term commitment to place, provides one source of tension between WHMs and some Sydney residents. As for technologies, there are central roles in this argument for technologies of representation (e.g. guidebooks), technologies of communication (e.g. telephones), technologies of inscription (e.g. diaries), and technologies of surveillance (e.g. passports).

This dissertation is about two related things. Most immediately, it is about British WHMs in Australia. But more broadly, it is about mobility – transnational corporeal mobility. In this context, Australia's working holiday programme (WHP) is not so much the end-point of my research as a case study, a way in, a filter through which I pass contemporary debates among tourism and globalisation theorists. Let me be explicit about my interest in mobility. I am less interested in figures such as the cosmopolitan and the flexible citizen which dominate writings on mobility, than I am in the differential nature of mobility; the way in which mobility is sometimes free, but is more often assisted, selective, or even enforced. Mobility is limited in numerous ways. Alongside

the pleasures of mobility, we find pressures and politics too. In other words, there is more to tourism and globalisation than mobility. There is also fixity, which requires positive identification, and takes numerous forms, including: refugee detention centres, which bring the still-essential role of the nation-state into focus; and purposeful projects of fixity, undertaken by individuals interested in security (e.g. job security) and proximity (e.g. proximate family).

This dissertation is about two related things. Most immediately, it is about British WHMs in Australia. More broadly, it is about mobility – transnational corporeal mobility. But ultimately, this dissertation is about how we *write* these seemingly mobile times – how we *write about* them ‘in here’, in Geography and the social sciences more generally, but also how we *inscribe* them ‘out there’, beyond the seminar room. Should we limit our concerns to theoretical thrust (core or profiling factors), or should we be concerned with historical narrative (a larger, more complex configuration)? Should we limit our concerns to tourists and vagabonds (polarisation models of globalisation), or should we attend to the ambiguous travelling and dwelling of more inbetween figures (middling transnationalism)? These are key questions for the dissertation. At this point, however, I introduce the case study, the wider research project, and the following chapters.

## **1.2 The case study**

Australia’s working holiday programme (WHP) dates back to 1975 when Australia introduced the universal visa system. Prior to this, all Commonwealth and Irish citizens of European descent were exempt from the visa requirement. As a part of this system, in order to preserve the existing arrangement under which young Australians were permitted to holiday and work in the UK, the WHP was established, allowing young British citizens similar rights in Australia. The objectives of the programme are clearly stated in various documents:

The working holiday programme aims to promote international understanding. It provides opportunities for resourceful, self-reliant and adaptable young people to holiday



in Australia and to supplement their funds through incidental employment (Visa application form 1150).

Australia's temporary residence programme seeks to facilitate the entry of persons who benefit the Australian community by contributing to its economic, cultural or social development. [...] The principle objective of the working holiday programme is to promote international understanding by enabling young people to experience the culture of another country (Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration 1997: 7-8).

At the time of writing, the regulations contain the following requirements. Applicants must be citizens of the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malta, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway or Hong Kong. They must be aged 18 to 30. They must have no dependent children. They must not work for the same employer or study for more than three months. And they must be of good health (have no disease or disability which is likely to endanger or be of cost to the Australian community), wealth (have approximately AU\$5000 for personal support during their stay and return airfare home) and character (have no convictions and no mental illness).

\* \* \* \* \*

I remember *The Guardian* and *BBC Online*, *EastEnders* and *The Bill*, Hollywood blockbusters, Premiership football on television and t-shirts, bright white beaches (littered with beer bottles), a tiny Japanese woman with high heels and a shocking pink suitcase. I remember the World Service, accents from across Europe, drunken voices slurring the national anthem (they don't remember...), mobile phone ring tones, travel anecdotes and recurring conversations (When did you get here? It's a small world! Where've you been? Where're you going? I recommend the... Stay at the... Visit the... I'm skint – I need a job soon. Back in England we... But here in Australia you... Goodbye – it's been great – I'll miss you). I remember Thai food in Newtown, South Indian food in Surry Hills, Italian food in Leichardt, fish and chips in Bondi, snags on the backyard barbie. I remember flies and sweat tickling my eyes, greasy factor 30 suncream giving me adolescent spots, rough sand and salt getting everywhere. And I remember moments of excitement, nervousness, bravery, jealousy. Most of all, I remember being overwhelmed.

Here comes the science. In the programme's first year (1975-6), 1855 working holiday visas were issued. This figure rose gradually to 6000 by 1983-4, and then dramatically to 45,136 by 1988-9. Coinciding with economic recession in the early 1990s, numbers fell to a low of 25,557 for 1992-3. But since that year they have climbed steadily again, reaching 76,570 for 2000-1. Of the 46,627 WHMs temporarily resident in Australia in 2001<sup>1</sup>, 23,338 were British, 8744 Irish, 6506 Japanese, 2751 Canadian, 2263 Dutch, 1442 German, and 1277 Korean. Of this same group, 57% were aged 18 to 24, and 41% 25 to 30 (corresponding figures for 1996 were 66% and 33%). 49% were male and 51% female. In 1995, Murphy found that 76% of WHMs had been employed before leaving for Australia (over 90% for Japan and Ireland, under 5% for the Netherlands), and 10% had been students (less than 5% for the UK, Japan and Ireland, over 90% for the Netherlands). Of those in employment, most had been in skilled or semi-skilled occupations, the highest scoring ASCO<sup>2</sup> category being Clerks (71%). Of all WHMs, most had completed or were studying for a post-secondary school qualification. So to summarise, the yearly figure for WHMs entering Australia has grown rapidly over the last decade-and-a-half, with only a few minor disruptions. Approximately half the current cohort are British citizens, with other significant source countries being the Republic of Ireland, Japan, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, and the Republic of Korea. All years within the required age range (18-30) are well-represented. Growth rates for the upper age groups are particularly fast. There is an even gender split. Most WHMs are current or recent students, although this characteristic varies greatly by country of citizenship. In fact, there is much variation within the WHM profile: women are over-represented among Germans and Japanese WHMs; the lower age groups are over-represented among Dutch and Canadians.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although data on total visas issued per programme year are widely available and presented above, no corresponding data are available disaggregating WHMs by country of citizenship, age or gender. To do this, I use data from Australia's Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, and specifically from their Travel and Immigration Processing System, which provides a snapshot or stock estimate of WHMs temporarily resident in Australia on one particular day of the year (in this case, 30th June, 1996-2001).

<sup>2</sup> Australian Standard Classification of Occupations.

<sup>3</sup> For detailed tables of these statistics, refer to Appendix A.

In 1997, Buchanan and Rossetto found that 42% of male backpackers<sup>4</sup> left home for Australia alone and only 31% of females. And while 77% of Japanese left alone, 67% of Scandinavians both left and returned with the same group. The survey also found that approximately half travel straight from their home country to Australia and straight from Australia back again. In 1999, Thoms found that other countries visited by backpackers on the way to or from Australia include New Zealand (26%), Thailand (17%), Singapore (14%), Malaysia (10%), Indonesia (9%), the USA (7%), and Hong Kong (5%). This study also found that 53% arrive in Sydney, 14% in Melbourne, and 10% in Brisbane. In 2001, Bolin found that 14% of backpackers arrived with some sort of pre-paid package (internal flights, tours, accommodation, ground transport etc.).

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Some of us leave well paid jobs as account managers or commercial analysts. Some of us leave less well paid yet equally demanding jobs as teachers or nurses. Some of us come straight from university, or at least a year or two later, on completion of graduate training programmes. Some of us come straight from school, leaving home for the first time, often with financial assistance from parents. A few of us sell or rent out homes we own. A few of us sell up the small businesses we founded straight out of school a decade ago. We leave seemingly excited mothers and concerned fathers, to care for our mail and stored possessions, to deal with our banks and student loan companies. Some of us leave stress or monotony at work or home behind. Some of us leave confused partners behind (some of us bring them with us). For most of us, this is our first time. For some of us,

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<sup>4</sup> After Pearce (1990), backpackers (or budget travellers, or Free Independent Travellers) are defined in Australian tourism studies against tourists using social criteria: they prefer budget accommodation, meeting other travellers, independently organised and flexible schedules, longer holidays, and informal and participatory activities. But backpacker statistics, produced for the most part by the Bureau of Tourism Research in Canberra, rest on another definition, for reasons of practicality: backpackers are those tourists who spend at least one night of their stay in backpackers hotels or youth hostels. Either way, backpackers are not the same as WHMs. They include large numbers of US and New Zealand citizens, older travellers, foreign students, and sometimes even domestic weekenders. Having said that, backpacker statistics remain useful to this study because, due to their long stay, WHMs make up a large proportion of backpackers within Australia at any point in time and so greatly influence backpacker surveys (WHMs account for 20% of total inbound backpackers and 60% of total backpacker bed nights – TNT 2001).

it's just what our mates have done, a bit of a laugh. For others though, it's a daunting challenge, a serious business, a project or mission.

In our backpacks (with our national flags stitched into their hoods), we carry cameras, passports, travel guides (*Lonely Planet*), personal stereos, debit and credit cards (giving us access to strong pounds, in reassuringly large amounts for some of us, in worryingly small amounts for others), photos of family and friends, diaries, travel literature (Bill Bryson), *curriculum vitae*, addresses of friends and relatives in Australia. A few of us carry suitcases appropriately packed with suits and even lap-top computers. In our heads, we carry images from *Neighbours*, *Home and Away*, *Crocodile Dundee*, nature and travel programmes (the Opera House, Ayers Rock/Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef); fragments of stories told by friends and older siblings of Byron Bay, Airlie Beach, Fraser Island; inspiration from within Alex Garland's *The Beach* or Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*; cultural history – (post)colonial and romantic sensibilities. And in our heads, it would seem, a very few of us carry very little, no idea.

Some of us head straight for Australia, the primary destination, less and less on one-way tickets, more and more on cheap returns. Others head for South East Asia (traditionally), Indochina (fashionably, and increasingly), maybe South Africa, maybe North America, Fiji, New Zealand, on round-the-world tickets. We head this way just before the northern winter kicks in if we can, with the birds.

We arrive, most of us in Sydney, eager to find work, some of us in Perth, Darwin, Melbourne, Cairns, with money to burn first. Some of us get picked up from the airport by friends or relatives, and put up for a few nights on the spare bed or lounge floor. Some of us head for hostels in convenient Central, quiet Glebe, 24-hour Kings Cross, iconic Bondi, popular Coogee, exclusive Manly, by complementary minibus. A few of us head for AU\$200-a-night hotel rooms, unprepared to do the backpacker thing with everyone else, and flush enough not to have to. A few of us, particularly youngsters or those of us from Scandinavia and the Netherlands, meet up with our gap year company representatives or package tour guides, who'll sort us with one or two nights accommodation, a bank account, phonecard, book of discount vouchers (free meal at the

Coogee Bay Hotel), visit to the Jackaroo/Jillaroo school<sup>5</sup>, membership of an employment agency, possibly even a work placement (stud farm in the Hunter Valley). On that first day we phone or e-mail parents to tell them of our safe arrival. And we sleep. Over the next few days we open a bank account, get our tax file number and medicare card, meet old friends and their new friends, do the sights (the Opera House, the Harbour Bridge, Bondi Beach), go out on the town (some of us in backpacker minibuses to backpacker pubs and clubs), look for more permanent lodgings and paid work (recruitment agencies for most of us, attractive job offers sorted from home for a very few), or plan overland travel; whatever our finances will stand. Most of us end up in cheap weekly-rate hostels or flat-sharing with travel partners from home, new friends just met, or existing households looking for someone to fill an empty bed or floor-space. Some of us purposefully search out houses full of Australians. Most of us end up fairly close to that first hostel or those first-met-friends. A very few of us return home, homesick, sick of away.

I remember hostels: brightly painted walls, notice boards. We check in, pay our key deposit, take our sheets and make our beds, bag, label and stow our food. We sunbathe, dip in the pool, smoke cigarettes, drink cups of tea. Later we watch television, play pool or cards, read, listen to personal stereos, write in diaries or guest books, make phonecalls, surf the Internet, cook and eat, drink from communal boxes of cheap wine. Later still some of us return from nights out, clutching door codes in unsteady hands. We retire to dorm rooms, under Thai sarongs, and snore. Alarm clocks set. Ear plugs in. I remember luxurious, purpose-built hostels, with managers trained in 5-star hotels, duvets, towels and soap on the beds, double rooms and *en suite* bathrooms, smoke alarms and fire extinguishers at every turn, bars, swimming pools, saunas, cinemas. And converted boarding houses with locked fire escapes and kids of 16 in charge on front desks. Small hostels where people stay a while and get to know each other. Large anonymous hostels with 600 beds and continuous new faces. Loud and quiet hostels. I remember flats and houses. Bedrooms full. Communal room full. Backpack and pile of clothes in the

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<sup>5</sup> Jackaroo/Jillaroo schools are where backpackers learn the way of the cowboy/cowgirl, Australian style. Curiously, these businesses are almost entirely dependent on Dutch backpackers. I offer explanation for this in Chapter 5.

corner. St George flag in the window. Postcards and family photos on the wall. Ash trays and beer bottles. But also luxury apartments. Cream carpets. Home offices. Most of all, I remember being overwhelmed.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1995, Murphy found WHMs working mainly in temporary and low paid jobs on farms (picking or packing fruit) and building sites, and in restaurants, bars, offices (smiling on reception, selling on the telephone, putting data into computers), factories, and shops. 33% intended to work in the same occupation as at home. 30% would do anything; particularly something different. 43% ended up labouring (only 5% had been labouring back home). 50% worked in Sydney.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many of us settle and work for a period in Sydney. Some of us find work informally, asking in shops or at building sites, never needing our visa, doing jobs for longer than the three month limit. Some of us do things properly, arranging work before leaving home, in our field, maybe even in a branch of our company. Many of us end up doing the dreaded telemarketing and door to door sales, or the standard data entry and bar/restaurant work. Some of us end up in ice cream factories or selling sweet corn on the beach though, or, as in at least one case, as deregulation consultants to Energy Australia (earning almost AU\$200K pro rata).

In Sydney (for most of us Glebe, Central, Coogee, Bondi, Manly, Kings Cross – not at night for lone women – for some of us Newtown, Redfern, Surry Hills, even Camden) we acquire mobile phones, summer clothes, sun hats, insect repellent, street maps, second hand furniture, posters and house plants, neighbours, a local shop, work colleagues. On weekdays most of us get the bus or train into town. At work, some of us hungover, we surf the Internet and send e-mails. After work we switch off. Some of us play tennis or squash, visit the gym or swimming pool. Later we cook and watch television. We may end up in the pub (backpacker pubs for some of us – The World, The Globe – local pubs

for others). There's always an excuse. Friends arrive and depart (bringing us highs, leaving us lows). Friends of friends have birthdays. Our football team plays on Sky TV. Our nation competes (very loosely) in Eurovision. On Fridays many of us go out with work colleagues. Some of us end up at the Coogee Palace or some such club – Friday's a big night. Before bed, some of us text partners left back home (tenderly, drunkenly, guiltily). On the weekend we get up late, maybe go for a jog or play 5-a-side, do washing at the laundrette, meet friends (show photos, exchange stories), go for coffee or lunch, go to the cinema, read the paper, go to the beach (Coogee, Bondi, Manly, Palm Beach – where *Home and Away* is filmed), send e-mails at the Internet cafe or local library, go shopping (Pitt Sreet or Paddington market), get takeaway food, watch videos, go to the pub, phone home. Some of us do the tourist thing. Visit the museums and galleries. Wander round Circular Quay or Darling Harbour. Some of us take courses (in diving or photography). Alternatively, some of us do nothing, purposefully, be idle, thoughtfully. Those waiters and shop assistants among us work. On occasion we do weekends away, to the Blue Mountains, the Hunter Valley, Canberra for most of us (we walk the tracks, photograph the views, buy the souvenirs, return to Sydney with refocused minds and stiffened bodies), to Byron Bay, Melbourne, the Snowy Mountains (ski fields) for some of us. On occasion some of us attend the barbecues or sports events of our Australian friends or relatives.

Some of us, especially those of us with poor English, head off fruit picking though. Routine here (in Batlow, Young, Shepperton, Orange) is 5.30 a.m. breakfast, hard and hot days (men picking, women packing), early and cold nights. Some of us camp with Australian workers (and numerous unidentified bugs). Others find hostel beds for their aching bodies. Some only last a day. Others last the season (November to May down in New South Wales/Victoria). And a few of us work as home help on isolated sheep stations, or as barmaids (yes, barmaids) in desert highway roadhouses.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1999, Thoms found that, of journeys taken by backpackers within Australia, 43% were by bus and coach, and 32% were by air transport. The top five activities undertaken were

shopping (78%), the beach (76%), national parks (72%), pubs and clubs (68%) and botanical and other gardens (64%). In 2001, TNT found that 40% (and rising) of backpackers hired or purchased a car or campervan. In 1997, Buchanan and Rossetto found that 5% of backpackers hitch-hiked, and the average number of States visited by all backpackers was 3.3 (83% New South Wales, 68% Queensland, 52% Northern Territory, 50% Victoria, 31% South Australia, 27% Western Australia, 16% Australian Capital Territory, and 7% Tasmania). Within these States, most popular regions were Sydney (79%), Melbourne (48%), Far North Queensland – Cairns (48%), Brisbane (42%), Darwin (38%), Alice Springs (38%), Upper North Coast New South Wales – Byron Bay (37%), and Petermann – Ayers Rock/Uluru (37%).

\* \* \* \* \*

Many of us spend Christmas and New Year in Sydney, some of us (mostly British and Irish, mostly young) on Bondi beach. We all call home on these two days, and feel particularly homesick, usually in that order. And we receive presents in the post: Marks and Spencers knickers for some of us Brits, liquorice for the Dutch among us. That is, unless family or friends have come out to Australia for Christmas (a surprisingly popular practice). Some of us leave Sydney in the New Year. Some stick around for Mardi Gras (early February). But eventually, with the change of the seasons, most of us leave, some of us nervous and reluctant, some of us excited and relieved, inspired by glossy *TNT Magazine* photos and hours of late-night storytelling. A few don't leave though – some not even after twelve months run out. Still down south as the nights advanced, I remember aching for the (selectively remembered) way we do winter in the north: central heating, hats, gloves and scarves, cosy pubs serving warm beer.

Many of us (especially the young and strapped for cash) head north up the east coast, to the sun. Some by bus (Greyhound), some by tour (Oz Experience – especially young British and Irish, especially women), hostelling. Some by hired or just-proudly-purchased car or campervan, camping (especially older Dutch, Germans and



Scandinavians). A few hitch<sup>6</sup>. Some of us do activities: 4WD tours, sailing trips, rafting, sky diving, bungee jumping, scuba diving, horse riding. Most of us party. At each stop we send postcards home – Byron Bay, Noosa, Hervey Bay, Airlie Beach. From Cairns, for practical reasons of budget and security, many of us begrudgingly take tours: north to Cape Tribulation, east to the Great Barrier Reef, and west to Darwin and into the Red Centre. A few fly out of Darwin to South East Asia and home. The rest of us head south. In Melbourne we visit the *Neighbours* set and meet the stars. Many of us time it for the Grand Prix (March) or Melbourne Cup (early November). A few of us make Tasmania. A few of us make Western Australia (especially the Dutch, Germans and Scandinavians among us). We're more serious there. It's more expensive. And there's scenery, landscape, views to be captured.

So this is the circuit. But the way we all do it varies infinitely. Some of us leave Sydney for South Australia and the Northern Territory. Return to Sydney and head up the east coast. Return again and set out for Melbourne and Tasmania. From Tasmania to Adelaide and on to Perth. Some of us arrive in Melbourne, travel to Sydney via Canberra, up the east coast and across to Darwin, down to Alice and west to Perth, back to Melbourne (and Tasmania), finally back to Sydney. Some of us arrive in Perth, tour the west coast, and then do two big jumps: one to the centre (Ayers Rock/Uluru); one to Sydney. Some of us leave Sydney on arrival and spend six months hopping from town to town in rural New South Wales and Victoria. You get the idea. Some of us do the global tourism icons – Ayers Rock/Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef – and the Australia backpacking icons – Byron Bay, Fraser Island. Increasingly, with Boomerang passes and other cheap packages, we fly between them, and over the between-them-spaces. But some of us visit relatives, wherever they are. Bizarrely, a few Japanese men ride motorbikes or even bicycles across the Nullabor and Gibson deserts (it's some kind of club initiation thing, word has it).

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<sup>6</sup> Hitch-hiking used to be popular among backpackers in Australia. Then, between 1989 and 1992, Ivan Milat abducted seven backpackers along the Hume Highway, brutally murdered them, and buried their bodies in the Belanglo State Forest. I return to this story in chapter 7.

Until it's time to leave. We leave with photos and videos, full-to-bursting journals and address books (with tickets, maps, leaflets, brochures, colourful five-dollar notes, and other scraps), credit card bills we daren't open, longer *curriculum vitae*, fond memories and good stories, certificates of attainment (in scuba diving etc.), fragments of pub-quiz-knowledge (there's a racist woman in Queensland called Pauline Hanson or something... there's a dead horse in Melbourne called Phar Lap that's famous for some reason or other), passport stamps, tanned and mosquito-bitten bodies, opened eyes and minds – or at least their corresponding hyphenated adjectives for ourselves (open-eyed, open-minded, and also grown-up, world-wise, laid-back, chilled-out, easy-going, and also confident, experienced, tolerant, courageous, calm, relaxed). Some of us return with embryonic, idealistic plans for future (more ambitious) travel. With the bug. Others return with urgent needs to settle and re-establish routine. Some of us return to our old jobs, pick up where we left off. But not before we've proudly sold our achievements, to family and friends over photo albums, possibly to new employers at interview. Some of us aim to be back for Christmas. As always there are others, some of whom get sponsored by employers and stay for four years or more (the much-muttered-about 457 visa).

### **1.3 The research project**

This project began, in a sense, back in November 1996 when I left England for Australia to begin my own working holiday. I kept a diary for the year. It tells a story of “gruelling” treks, “healthy, fresh” air, and “dramatic [...] spectacular [...] inspiring” views; avoiding “tourists who think they're in Ibiza” and searching out “real travellers”; and work on farms, construction sites, and my gendered self: “It feels good to walk home in dirty boots, shorts and vest, with a tan, and a tuckerbag slung over my shoulder [...]. I'm getting a kick out of labouring outside, wearing big boots and a cowboy hat, and eating steak sandwiches [...]. Real man's work”. After eleven months I returned to England, another year of study in Birmingham, and two lost years in the wild zone of private sector research and consultancy (would you believe someone can fall into this by accident, as if stubbing a toe?). All this time I was haunted, by Australia, working

holidays, qualitative research methods, and an imagined academic world of theoretically informed research, ethics committees, and long breaks for good coffee.

So in 2000, with the help of Nigel Thrift and colleagues at the University of Bristol, I submitted a research proposal (PhD) to the Economic and Social Research Council. Reading it now, two years on, I am struck by how little I have deviated from my original three concerns. First, how has it come to this, that on any one day we may find almost 50,000 working holiday makers working and holidaying in Australia? Second, what are the implications of such working holidays for their makers? And third, what are the implications of this working holiday maker presence for Australia and Australians? This is not to say that the project has not evolved. It has, in that it has adapted to external influences: texts and conversations primarily, both purposefully sought out and stumbled across by chance. One such text, encountered early on in the project, was a report by the (Commonwealth Government of Australia's) Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration, *Working Holiday Makers: More than Tourists* (1997). It was the last of a stream of reports published through the 1990s by various government agencies in response to the WHP's increasing size and to murmurings among trades unionists and others about the displacement of Australian workers (this was a time of high domestic unemployment in Australia) and the exploitation of WHMs by employers paying under-award wages; a stream of reports which led to the programme being capped in 1995 at 38,000<sup>7</sup> (see Dignam 1990, National Population Council's Migration Committee 1991, Bell and Carr 1994, Murphy 1995, Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration 1997). So this 1997 report deals very well with economic impacts, and in great detail. An upside and a downside are identified. On the one hand, WHMs help overcome labour shortages in regional areas, particularly during peak periods such as harvest season; they spend money right across Australia (AU\$400-50 million annually, including most of the money they earn in Australia); they act in the transfer of work-related ideas and practices; and they assist in the establishment of long-term trade and business links, including further tourism. On the other hand, WHMs do seem to threaten Australian jobs in a few specific industries and regions (the tourist industry in Queensland, for example); to

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<sup>7</sup> The cap was later raised to 47,000 following representations from the hospitality and horticultural industries. It was eventually scrapped.

accept less than award wages, thus binding local workers into accepting poor labour conditions also; and to enable employers to opt out of training schemes for local workers.

This is all very interesting. But what really screamed at me from inside this report was the contrast between confident and rigorous discussion of economic impacts on the one hand, and timid, careless, occasional nods of the head towards social and cultural impacts on the other:

[...] a chance to expand their life experiences through travel, so that young people can learn more about Australia (piii).

Young people from overseas benefit from a working holiday by experiencing the Australian lifestyle and interacting with Australian people in a way that is likely to leave them with a much better understanding and appreciation of Australia than would occur if they travelled here on visitor visas. This contributes to their personal development and can lead to longer term benefits for the Australian community (pxv).

[...] skills and cultural appreciation (pxv).

The committee recommends that Australia's working holiday program be maintained because it: enhances the social and cultural development of young people; promotes mutual understanding between Australia and other nations; generates economic benefits; is an important component of the tourism industry (pxvii).

[...] personal development, cultural appreciation, skills enhancement (pxxv).

The principal objective of the working holiday programme is to promote international understanding by enabling young people to experience the culture of another country. By allowing young people to remain in Australia for an extended period of time and to experience closer contact with the community through incidental work, the programme provides the opportunity to gain a better appreciation of Australia, its people and their culture, and to promote mutual understanding between Australia and other countries (pp8-9).

By allowing young people to travel to other countries and by enabling them to experience different cultures and lifestyles in a more direct way than would be possible under normal visa arrangements, the programme broadens young people's life experiences and contributes to their personal development (p32).

[...] a wealth of ideas and experience (p33).

And it is not just this particular report. It is the other ones listed above too. And it is Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) press releases and fact sheets. It is even one of my WHM interviewees (Vinnie<sup>8</sup>): "I think I've picked up beneficial things, such as confidence, meeting people, blah, blah, blah". Why

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<sup>8</sup> The names of all WHMs have been changed for the usual reasons of confidentiality.

don't we take the non-economic seriously? Surely, as in the case of economic impacts, there might be two sides to this story of social and cultural impacts, an upside and a downside. And surely it is not good enough to simply and endlessly repeat such ambiguous terms as "cultural appreciation" and "mutual understanding" without interrogation or recourse to supportive evidence. How much do WHMs interact with Australians? What do they learn about Australia? What ideas do they bring home? To what use do they put them? What does it mean that they have their life experiences expanded upon or broadened? Or that they personally develop socially and culturally (from what into what)? Seeking to explain this screaming contrast, between the treatment of the economic on the one hand, and the social and cultural on the other, I found juice in the 1997 report's research methodology section. The authors identify two types of evidence: statistical and anecdotal (good and evil). Similarly, in interview, a civil servant at the Commonwealth Government of Australia's Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) distinguished between "statistical and factual information", and then "less tangible [...] sort of social and sort of lifestyle and that sort of stuff". These people speak the language of audit. So they struggle when some social and cultural impacts refuse to be counted and won't add up. What about qualitative methods, and the language of thick description? In the front few paragraphs of this thesis, I attempt a conversation between the two languages of audit and thick description. I hope that what each one illuminates and casts shadow upon comes through. I return to these last few points in Chapter 4.

There were other influential encounters in that first year. I read Orvar Löfgren's wonderfully complex and subtle history of the holiday (1999), and learnt that travel produces – spaces, landscapes, industries, desires, bodies, 'authentic' entertainments, masculinities and femininities, rhythms and movements, aesthetics and architecture, relations with other people and with nature – and is contradictory – democracy and segregation, freedom and regulation, individuality and standardisation, improvisation and routine, surprise and predictability. Of relevance to the above paragraph, he writes (pp269-70):

At times new forms of mass tourism hold out the hope of changing the world, turning locals into cosmopolitans, breaking down artificial boundaries between nations, localities, classes, or generations – creating global communities. But moving out can also be a way of staying the same. While the skills of becoming cosmopolitan can be important cultural capital for some, they don't work for others. Tourism can both open or close the mind.

And I read John Urry's manifesto, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century* (2000), and learnt that, in contemporary times, inhuman objects (machines, technologies, texts, images) are reconstituting social relations through the production of mobilities (risks, consumer goods and services, cultures, migrants and visitors, symbols and icons) across borders. So we should refocus away from nation-state-society towards mobilities, including the travels of people, and their implications for experiences of time, space, dwelling and citizenship.

Then, in November 2001, I left for Australia in search of mobility, and flew straight into a political row. In the wake of what has become known as 9/11, the rape of white women by Lebanese men in Sydney's western suburbs, and the storming of a Norwegian tanker called Tampa by Australian troops to prevent the landing of 438 refugees fished out of the sea off Christmas Island, John Howard's Liberal-National Coalition had been returned to power in an election dominated by immigration policy, with the words "Australia has an absolute right as a sovereign country to decide who comes here", and amid numerous accusations, including one from Paul Keating, the former Labor Party Prime Minister, accusing Howard of playing the Pauline Hanson card (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8/12/01). (Recall that Pauline Hanson is the founder and former leader of One Nation, an ultra-conservative anti-immigration party which won brief popularity in the mid 1990s, particularly in Queensland). This row raged for my entire nine months in Australia. Howard's six detention centres, where approximately 1000 refugees from Afghanistan and elsewhere are detained behind razor wire for up to five years, were rarely out of the news. At the largest, Woomera, detainees sewed up their lips and went on hunger strike to protest their treatment. On 15 May 2002, the day after Budget Day, Australia's *Daily Telegraph* led with the title "Fortress Australia", above details of additional funds for national security and border protection (Figure 1.1).



BUDGET 2002: 15-PAGE SPECIAL REPORT

# THE Daily Telegraph

Wednesday, May 15, 2002

\$1\*  
Including GST AM

## FORTRESS

### DEFENCE

- ◆ **\$1bn** funding for defence spending including border security, new missiles, warships and planes
- ◆ War on terror will cost an additional **\$194m**, bringing the total to **\$2.3bn**
- ◆ **\$350m** to fund additional deployment of Australian forces including F/A-18s to Diego Garcia
- ◆ **\$121m** for counter measures against chemical, biological and nuclear weapons

### DOMESTIC SAFETY

- ◆ **\$1.3bn** over five years for internal security
- ◆ Federal police and intelligence agencies get **\$539m**
- ◆ Anti-terror rapid response ranks to be doubled
- ◆ Formation of Australian Defence Force Tactical Assault counter-terrorist group and an Incident Response Regiment on the east coast

## AUSTRALIA

**\$3bn pledged to keep the nation safer**

By MALCOLM FARR  
Chief Political Reporter

A GRIM Budget last night doubled Australia's spending on the war against terrorism with \$3 billion added to funding for the fight against enemies at home and abroad.

Treasurer Peter Costello urged taxpayers to remember their feelings the day after the terror strikes in the US, as he increased funding for military and internal security to \$6bn.

### MAIN POINTS

#### Health

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme co-payments rise by \$1 to \$4.60 for concession cardholders, and by \$6.20 to \$28.60 for others

#### Aged Care

\$654m to be spent on upgrading nursing homes, aged care providers and at-home carers. Also 6000 additional packages over four years for those who want to stay in their own homes

#### Deficit

Despite a \$2.1bn cash surplus, a deficit of \$1.2bn will be posted for the end of the current financial year, Mr Costello's first deficit since his debut budget in 1996/97.

He said the reaction of Australians had been clear: "They wanted to know their Government was preparing against such

a situation." The Treasurer made a sombre presentation which revealed the Budget was in deficit this financial year — the first

since 1996. During the federal election campaign last year Mr Costello gave a guarantee: "We will keep the Budget in surplus."

As a contrast, he forecast rampant economic growth for 2002-2003 and the possibility unemployment would fall to around 5 per cent in two years.

The new security spending over four to five years will see \$524 million go to defence for operations in Afghanistan and else

Continued Page 3

Figure 1.1: Fortress Australia



So the project evolved. The search for mobility became a search for mobility and its apparent opposite, fixity. And the external influences kept coming. In interviews with key players in Sydney's backpacker industry it emerged that they fear backpacking in Australia has become too easy, and that people will stop coming, because it is all about the challenge. Has it? Will they? Is it? In Los Angeles, at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, I belatedly discovered an already large and still rapidly growing literature on transnationality. Sitting on the bus daydreaming, lying in my bed nightdreaming, reading the newspaper on the toilet, new ideas and information stacked up, pushing the project this way and that. There is no natural end point to such a process. This dissertation represents where I am at now, at the time of writing, today 11 November 2003.

## **1.4 The chapters**

Chapters 2 and 3 constitute my literature review or research context. In Chapter 2, I review the tourism literature. I discuss four lines of debate: in search of authenticity (Boorstin 1964, MacCannell 1976, Edensor 1998); in search of novelty (Cohen 1972, 1979, 1984, Shields 1991); the tourist gaze and postmodern tourism (Urry 1990, 2002a, Veijola and Jokinen 1994, Edensor 1998, Löfgren 1999); and over 200 years of holiday practices, many centred on enjoyment and happiness (Crouch 1999, Inglis 2000, Löfgren 1999). Rather than align myself with one or other theorist or theory, I pick and mix from these lines of debate to establish a baseline or set of maxims: there is no one motivation for tourism; the body and space are central to tourism; we can identify patterns in tourism but must treat typologies with care; tourism is double-edged – it is highly productive yet highly problematic.

Chapter 3, a review of writings on globalisation, transnationalism and mobility, is structured much like Chapter 2. It begins with the arguments of three influential globalisation theorists: David Harvey (1989), Anthony Giddens (1990), and Manuel Castells (1996). I go on to review the decade of debate to which these arguments gave rise, with particular reference to accusations of ethnocentrism and criticisms regarding determination, space and place, and the trajectory of globalisation. By the late 1990s, I



suggest, these accusations and criticisms had opened up space for at least two alternative imaginings of our seemingly interconnected world. One, transnationalism. I carve into early or old transnationalism, centred on the figure of the cosmopolitan (Field 1971, Hannerz 1990, Appadurai 1996), and late or new transnationalism, centred on flexible citizens, migrant networks and active nation-states (Ong 1999, Smith 2001). A second, mobility, I suggest was born of at least two parents, Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) *Nomadology* and James Clifford's (1992) 'Travelling Cultures', and has matured into a field of some debate (Urry 2000, Cresswell 2001, Crang 2002). Like Chapter 2, I conclude Chapter 3 with a baseline or set of maxims: cultural life at the present moment is complex, dialectical, double-edged; the nation-state at the present moment is not so much in crisis as in change; globalisation, transnationalism and mobility have their dark side.

In Chapter 4, I set out my philosophical position, modes of research practice, and methods. I detour through three classic models of social science – the positivist tradition, the hermeneutical tradition, the critical tradition – before rejecting positivism for social theory (humanism and Marxist-realism – Johnston 1997), and turning to five attempts at moving between and beyond the extremes of constructivism and critical realism (Delanty 1997): critical hermeneutical theory (Apel 1980, 1984, Habermas 1978, 1988); structuration theory and the new regional geography (Giddens 1979, 1981, 1984, Thrift 1983); the habitus (Bourdieu 1984); governmentality (Foucault 1991, 1997); and Actor Network Theory (Latour and Woolgar 1979, Michael 2000). I consider feminism and postmodernism briefly. Then I state my own position: reflexive realism/critical constructivism (Delanty 1997), far from the extremes of humanism as voluntarism and individualism, and Marxist-realism as historicism and determinism; and pragmatic universalism (Albrow 1996), far from the extreme of postmodernism as method, but informed by postmodernism as style and epoch (Dear 1994), and also informed by 1980s post-Marxism and political economy (Corbridge 1989, Peet and Thrift 1989), structuration theory, and Actor Network Theory. The concluding sections to Chapter 4 concern modes of research practice and methods. I have two approaches: political economy; and ethnography, informed by Geertz's (1973) thick description and Burawoy's (1998) extended case method. And I have four methods or techniques: paper-

based contextual work; corporate interviews; participant observation; and in-depth interviews with WHMs. Thoughts on positionality, partiality, interpretation and representation complete the chapter.

My first research question provides the focus for Chapter 5: How has it come to this, that on any one day we may find almost 50,000 WHMs working and holidaying in Australia? Inspired by Smith's (2001) agency-oriented approach to transnational urbanism, I consider some diverse forces for WHM mobility, organised into categories of agency: economics (Australia's backpacker industry, exchange rates; interest rates, oil prices, unemployment rates, the organisational shift towards transnational production and consumption); macro-politics (The Australian Tourist Commission, DIMIA); cultural politics (*Neighbours* and *Home and Away*, various travel narratives offered by society); and micro-politics (WHM tactics, family and friendship networks). I then move beyond Smith's (2001) humanistic conception of agency, to consider non-human actants: transport and communications technologies; and also 'nature', understood as bodies, environments and animals. The lengthy conclusion to Chapter 5 contains an important point. I do not wish to suggest that contemporary transnational mobility is unlimited, complete, or ever-expanding, as some commentators risk doing (Appadurai 1996, Urry 2000, Smith 2001). As regards British WHMs in Australia, each category of agency is double-edged – a force for both mobility and mobility's apparent opposite: fixity.

In Chapter 6 I address my second research question: What are the implications of such working holidays for their makers? I outline a binary we find among key players in Sydney's backpacker industry, journalists, and some classics of tourism theory (Boorstin 1964, MacCannell 1976), of yesterday's difficult and dangerous travel, undertaken by independent and conscientious explorers, productive of intense and meaningful experiences, and today's safe and soft tourism, packaged and sold to the masses, productive of serious drinking and casual sex. And, first, I suggest that, in the case of British WHMs in Australia, this narrative of loss is founded on some substance. WHMs act within many constraining structures, including Australia's increasingly competitive and professional backpacker industry, family and friends, and technologies of representation (travel guides, backpacker magazines, photography). Second, though, I

suggest that such a narrative risks overestimating WHMs, as serious and capable subjects travelling to be challenged. Not all WHMs backpack Australia for the challenge. Some do though, and for them Australia seems to remain a challenge, so they return home proud and fulfilled, with good stories, with strong narratives, which are vital to self-identity in high or late modernity (Giddens 1991). And third, I suggest that this narrative risks *underestimating* WHMs, as passive consumers of dominant production and autonomous meaning. WHMs get along in the constraining space of others through tactics or poetic activity (de Certeau 1984). WHM spaces are mostly spaces of relative freedom anyway. And some WHMs are reflexive about their position as tourists. They make an effort to meet Australians. They take advantage of the slow rhythms afforded by working holidays.

My third and final research question gives us Chapter 7: What are the implications of this WHM presence for Australia and Australians? I do three things in this chapter. First, I complete my thick description of WHMs by establishing what WHMs do in Sydney. Inspired by Clifford (1992), I suggest that WHMs cope with and share the enjoyment of 12 months in Australia by travelling-in-dwelling (passively, through the Internet, television, radio, and objects carried from home; and (inter)actively, through phonecalls, e-mails, gifts, and face-to-face conversations with other WHMs) and dwelling-in-travelling (through Sydney's backpacker and residential communities). Second, I present two case studies of WHM travelling and dwelling in Sydney: Sydney Central; and Sydney's Southern Beaches (specifically Coogee and Bondi). WHMs are welcome in Sydney Central, of Sydney Central train station and Chinatown, for their 'vibrancy' and 24-hour activity – they are 'young, healthy, attractive'; they consume food, drink and souvenirs. WHMs are less welcome in Coogee and Bondi, of many working class families pursuing purposeful projects of fixity, for their rubbish and car dumping, their late night noise – that exact same 24-hour activity. Finally, in this chapter, I consider what happens when working holidays come to an end. It would seem that some WHMs return home excited by the pleasures of mobility, eager to travel again. But other WHMs return home worried by the pressures of mobility, eager to settle down, with their own purposeful projects of fixity.

Chapter 8 concludes this study. It does so not with conclusions, but with partial and situated arguments, in keeping with the positions established in Chapter 4. Two broad points emerge. First, working holidays can do much for their makers, enabling personal development (strong narratives and modern skills) and some international understanding. Second, this case study is not a simple story of corporeal mobility. Together, these two broad points raise a new question – who gets to travel? – which leads me to comments on how we write mobility, and how we might write mobility in terms of rights, travelling mindsets, and tourism of the everyday.

## CHAPTER 2: TOURISM

### 2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I introduce two small literatures of immediate relevance to this project: studies of Australia's WHP; and studies of Australia's backpacker market. The first, I suggest, is primarily concerned with economic impacts – a response to the programme's recent growth, high unemployment rates in Australia through the early 1990s, and murmurings among trade unionists and others about the displacement of Australian workers and the exploitation of WHMs by employers paying under-award wages (see Dignam 1990, National Population Council's Migration Committee 1991, Bell and Carr 1994, Brooks *et al* 1994, Murphy 1995, Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration 1997). The second, studies of Australia's backpacker market, began with Pearce (1990), who defines backpackers against other tourists using social criteria (they prefer budget accommodation, meeting other travellers, independently organised and flexible schedules, longer holidays, and informal and participatory activities), but depends heavily upon International Visitor Survey data, which requires other definitions: backpackers are those tourists who spend at least one night of their stay in backpackers hotels or youth hostels (Bureau of Tourism Research definition; see Haigh 1995 and Buchanan and Rossetto 1997); or backpackers are anyone aged 15-29 years and visiting Australia for more than four weeks (James Cook University Townsville definition; see Pearce 1990, Loker 1992, Loker-Murphy and Pearce 1995). In Chapter 1, I list the kind of findings such studies and their more recent counterparts produce: 26% of backpackers visiting Australia also visit New Zealand (Thoms 1999); 14% of backpackers arrive in Australia with some sort of pre-paid package (Bolin 2001); 40% of backpackers visiting Australia hire or purchase a car or campervan (TNT 2001); and so on.

Also in Chapter 1, I suggest that these two literatures do not suffice as a research context for this project. Their treatment of economic impacts, to which statistical evidence lends itself, is confident and rigorous. But their treatment of social and cultural impacts, which sometimes refuse to be counted, is timid and careless. Recall that my research questions are worded in such a way that the social and cultural are important concerns of this

project. So, in this chapter and the next, I critically review two larger literatures which do provide context for this research: tourism (this chapter) and globalisation, transnationalism, mobility (Chapter 3).

How relevant is the tourism literature to Australia's WHP, given that most working holidays last for close to 12 months and involve periods of paid employment? After all, tourism is often defined as temporary (against more permanent forms of mobility such as migration) and leisure (against work)<sup>9</sup>. Urry (1990: 2) writes "Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely, regulated and organised work". And Inglis (2000: 9-10) writes "There must be no work while on vacation. Or if there is work, it must be work for which one is normally not paid". He defines tourism as time off from work, time won from capital, time won from producing things for the profit of others, time out, free time, time not to be spent, non-productive time, time for recklessness, waste and excess. I discuss this work-leisure binary in Chapter 6. At this stage, I simply identify it as that – a binary in need of deconstruction – and point to the following statement from the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration: "The principle objective of the programme is an extended holiday, with work being incidental to that holiday" (1997: 10). Having done that, this chapter is not a comprehensive review of the tourism studies literature, much of which, like the studies of Australia's WHP and backpacker market discussed above, is concerned with economic questions and quantitative techniques (Squire 1994). It is rather a selective critical review of those texts I find most interesting and relevant to this project, organised around four lines of debate: in search of authenticity; in search of novelty; the tourist gaze and postmodern tourism; and over 200 years of holiday practices, many centred on enjoyment and happiness.

## **2.2 In search of authenticity**

This line of debate began with Boorstin (1964). He finds it remarkable that our foreign travel has increased so much but this travel has made so little difference in our thinking

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<sup>9</sup> For an exception to studies which define tourism against migration, see *Tourism Geographies* Volume 2 Number 1, a focus issue on the increasing interplay between tourism and migration, in which tourism is defined as a form of migration, and also as one end of a continuum of personal mobility, blurring into migration somewhere towards the middle.

and feeling. He suggests that we are not noticeably more cosmopolitan or more understanding of other peoples, and explains this by focusing on the travel experience itself, arguing that this experience has been transformed from something uncomfortable, difficult, expensive, active, athletic (“the lost art of travel” p77), to something passive, safe, cheap, available, antiseptic, pleasant, relaxing (“the decline of the traveller and the rise of the tourist” pp84-5). His key point about authenticity is that ‘reality’ is no longer good enough for us. We have exaggerated expectations (from guidebooks, travel agents, newspapers, movies, television). As opposed to living cultures, we demand pseudo-events: collected and embalmed specimens, staged attractions, embellished ancient rites, spectacularised festivals. For Boorstin, then, tourists are sightseers on air-conditioned buses, touring “not to test the image by the reality, but to test reality by the image” (p116).

The first challenge to these claims of Boorstin came from MacCannell (1976). For MacCannell, modernity means instability, discontinuity and inauthenticity, tourism means searching for reality, meaning and authenticity in other cultures and historical periods, and successful tourism means seeing everything the way it ought to be seen, profoundly appreciating society and culture. Such success is difficult if not impossible to achieve, he suggests, because cultures cope with and profit from the intrusions of tourists by creating front and backstages. So whereas Boorstin argues that we demand pseudo events from our hosts, MacCannell argues that we demand authenticity, but that we receive only staged authenticity<sup>10</sup>.

There have been other challenges, to the claims of both Boorstin and MacCannell. Notably, Edensor (1998) defines authenticity not as an objective property, but as emergent and dynamic, open to negotiation and interpretation (see also Pearce and Moscardo 1988 and Bruner 1994). He suggests that desires for authenticity arise out of particular historical and geographical settings. MacCannell’s notion of authenticity must be seen, therefore, as particular to the specific practices of Western middle-class tourists

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<sup>10</sup> MacCannell’s theory of tourism as search for authenticity remains influential. In 2002 I heard him quoted at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers and, more interestingly from the perspective of social constructivism and reflexive modernity, by Mairin Colleary, Director of USIT NOW, at the Adventure Travel and Backpacker Industry Conference in Sydney.

and their desire for and attempt to understand and classify the 'other' (see also Graburn 1983).

### **2.3 In search of novelty**

Possibly the most influential critic of both Boorstin and MacCannell is Cohen (1972, 1979, 1984). He explains the early growth of tourism in terms of communications and transportation technologies (we became more aware of the outside world and at the same time travel became less arduous, dangerous and time-consuming) and the rise of the monied middle class. The starting point for his theory of tourism is that "novelty and strangeness are essential elements in the tourist experience", yet even today we are not totally comfortable about immersing ourselves in alien environments, forsaking our habits and customs (1972: 166). We find the unfamiliar threatening. So many of us seek "to experience the novelty of the macroenvironment of a strange place from the security of a familiar microenvironment" (p166), an "environmental bubble" (p166) or "ecological bubble" (p171). The exact combination of familiarity and strangeness on a tour depends on individual tastes and preferences. Cohen thus criticises Boorstin's evolutionary model (from traveller to tourist over time), and both Boorstin's and MacCannell's treatment of the tourist as a "unitary role-type" (1984: 378), and proposes instead a continuum from the strange to the familiar, a typology of tourists based on their relationship to both the tourist business establishment and the host country. He gives us four tourist roles, two institutionalised and two non-institutionalised: the organised mass tourist (highly institutionalised, confined to the environmental bubble, guided, provided with predictable, staged, standardised entertainment); the individual mass tourist; the explorer; and the drifter (highly non-institutionalised, shuns the tourist establishment, becomes immersed in the host culture).

Shields (1991) is not interested in typologies, but may be placed next to Cohen because his understanding of tourism also rests on the notion of strangeness or novelty. He identifies a comparative system of space in which places are defined against each other, in which some places at some times are socially constructed as marginal, on the social and cultural periphery. This process, social spatialisation, involves social activity and



cultural work, administration and discipline, but also contestation and negotiation. It produces images and myths, emotional and imaginary geographies, but also empirically specifiable landscapes, since images, myths etc. inform practices. Shields illustrates his theory of social spatialisation with case studies, one of which is Brighton, positioned in the eighteenth century as a seaside resort, a pleasure zone, within the broader framework of the social spatialisation of British culture, against serious and productive London and the innocent agricultural counties. Brighton was appropriate for specific behaviours outside the norms of everyday activity and dress. It was a place in which people experienced liminality (a loss of social coordinates, freedom from restraint, escape from reality) and carnival (a world inside-out, in which hierarchical rank is suspended since everyone is a participant). It was ludic, erotic and natural, as opposed to rational, ordered and civilised<sup>11</sup>.

## 2.4 The tourist gaze and postmodern tourism

First published a year before Shields' study of Brighton, John Urry's (1990) *The Tourist Gaze* was and remains a highly influential development of but also departure from these debates on authenticity and novelty (a second edition was published in 2002 – Urry 2002a)<sup>12</sup>. The argument is complex, so I summarise it in three parts: the tourist gaze; cultural changes; and the restructuring of tourism. First, then, the tourist gaze. Urry notes that technologies (the Claude glass, the camera, the balcony, cafes, windows, mirrors) and other factors have led to a general privileging of the eye in Western societies (scientific method, landscape painting and poetry, the flâneur). One register of this ocularcentrism is tourism. He writes that "at least a part of that experience [the tourist

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<sup>11</sup> Shields' theory of social spatialisation has been influential in tourism studies. For examples, see Edensor (1998) on the fundamental tension between logos and eros (in contemporary times we are witnessing on the one hand an increasing demand for the imposition of order and discipline in everyday lives, and on the other an increasing desire to escape to disorder, otherness, exotica, constructed at the margins of society: tourist spaces) and Winchester *et al* (1999) on the Australian Gold Coast during Schoolies Week (a triumph of holiday over work, desire over rationality, the exotic over the mundane, leisure over manufacturing, the natural over the civilised).

<sup>12</sup> *The Tourist Gaze* remains highly influential. In 2002, the session in which I presented my paper at the Annual Meeting of the Institute of Australian Geographers was named 'Shaping the Gaze: Places and Practices of Tourism'. That same year, I also sat in the audience of a session at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers entitled 'Reclaiming the Tourist Gaze' (a reference to gender and the tourist gaze, on which see Craik 1997 and Jokinen and Veijola 1997).

experience] is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes” (2002a: 1); that “the character of the gaze is central to tourism” (p13); of “the fundamentally visual nature of tourism experiences” (p145); that “the organising sense within the typical tourist experience is visual” (p146); and of “the awesome dominance of the visual for the character of tourism development” (p149). Of the many points he makes about this gaze, I pick out three. First, it is constructed in relation to its opposite: non-tourist forms of social experience, regulated and organised work, the ordinary and everyday. Second, like the gaze of Foucault’s medic, it is socially organised and systematised, it is authorised and reproduced by professionals, through film, television, literature, postcards etc. Third, there is no single tourist gaze. It has changed and developed in different societies, between different social groups, and in diverse historical periods. There are now many tourist gazes (the spectatorial gaze, the reverential gaze, the anthropological gaze, the environmental gaze, the mediatised gaze, the mobilised gaze) authorised by many discourses (education, health, group solidarity, pleasure and play, heritage and memory, nation).

Urry pays particular attention to the modern tourist gaze and the postmodern tourist gaze. He notes that the modern tourist gaze (mass tourism, the seaside resort) arose out of certain conditions: an increase in the economic welfare of the industrial population; high levels of employment; rapid urbanisation; development of work as time- and space-bound; the rational recreation movement; the holidays-with-pay movement; the Romantic movement; development of the railway. He then notes some recent cultural changes, some new conditions. There has been a reversal of the process of structural differentiation, by which distinct social institutions came to specialise in particular tasks or functions (the economy, the family, the state, science, morality, aesthetics etc. – horizontal differentiation) and by which each sphere consists of a number of distinctions (high and low culture, elite and mass consumption – vertical differentiation). Culture has come to occupy a central position in the organisation of present-day societies. Postmodernism, as a particular set of cultural developments, involves a dissolving of the boundaries between high and low cultures, and between different cultural forms (tourism, art, television, shopping). Postmodern cultural forms are mechanically, electronically and commercially reproduced. They reject uniqueness and originality for immediate

impact and pleasure. And they problematise representation and reality, since many referents of significations are themselves representations – a world of sign and spectacle, a world of copies and texts upon texts.

A key argument of *The Tourist Gaze* is that these cultural changes mean restructuring for tourism. Again, Urry makes many points about postmodern tourism. Again, I select three. First, the notion of the tourist gaze as distinct from other social activities and occurring at particular places for particular periods of time is undermined. The tourist gaze is increasingly bound up with many other social and cultural practices. It declines in specificity. It becomes universalised. Second, the figure of the post-tourist (Feifer 1985) comes to the fore. The post-tourist watches television and surfs the Internet, delights in choice, accepts the commodification of tourism, knows she or he is a tourist and tourism is a series of games, an end in itself, with no single authentic experience to be found. Third, in opposition to the bourgeois order, members of the service class, to whom Urry links the rise of postmodernism, prioritise asceticism and minimalism. They take ‘real’ holidays on the periphery. They shun tourism for travel. Their gaze is romantic and educated. Disillusioned with the modern, they seek out the countryside as green tourists. Frustrated by the visual media (which makes more and more of the world ordinary), they seek out the extraordinary as adventure tourists.

Through the 1990s, many tourism theorists used these arguments of Urry as a starting point for their own work. Ritzer and Laska (1997), for example, take the figure of the postmodern tourist, and explain it in terms of McDonaldisation (the modern world, dominated by controlling non-human technologies, gets increasingly efficient, calculable, predictable, and irrational – Weber’s irrationality of extreme rationality). They characterise Disneyworld as somewhere which presents no surprises, which is dehumanising, yet where people feel secure. They write of the McDisneyisation of tourism. Another example is Munt’s (1994) study of ‘Other postmodern tourists’ – those contemporary tourists who, unlike post-tourists, shun simulacrum and use specialist agents and tour operators to arrange personalised or customised journeys to authenticity, uniqueness and knowledge of other cultures. Munt asks the question: are these Other postmodern tourists resisting mass tourism and post-tourism because of some postmodern

nostalgia for the traditions, environments and travel styles of earlier times, or are they just involved in a middle class struggle to establish and maintain social differentiation? After Bourdieu (1984), he notes that classes struggle to distinguish themselves from each other by education, occupation, residence, and commodities, including experiences such as holidays. One class fraction identified by Bourdieu is the new petite bourgeoisie, low on economic capital, dependent on cultural capital or sign value to differentiate themselves. Munt argues that this class fraction undertakes Other postmodern tourism to stoke-up on cultural capital (the qualities of strength of character, adaptability, worldliness), which has an exchange value in the job market back home (travel as an informal qualification, the passport as a record of achievement)<sup>13</sup>.

Other tourism theorists take issue with Urry's positioning of the gaze as central to, the organising sense within, and awesomely dominant regarding tourism experiences. Veijola and Jokinen (1994) agree with Urry that Western philosophical discussion privileges the mind (which sees) over the body. But they fail to see why tourism research should do the same. Their paper is written in the style of a travel journal. They report on an imaginary holiday during which they encounter various tourism theorists (Krippendorf, MacCannell, Urry, Löfgren, Rojek, Feifer) while over-eating, getting drunk, disclosing their bodies on the beach, and putting their feet in the sand and water. In other words, they place the texts of Urry and others in the interactional context of the social text of tourist sites – they rewrite the texts into tourist events and encounters, times and spaces. On the tourist gaze, Veijola and Jokinen write (p133):

Isn't it rather the tourist body that breaks with the established routines and practices? We do gaze at dance performances and museums at home don't we? But instead, hardly ever engage ourselves in singing and dancing together; very rarely at home do we share the feeling of being together in this big, wild, incomprehensible world, full of strangers whose words and gestures don't say anything. Here, we know it in our conscious bodies that are temporarily united in an utterly physical ritual.

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<sup>13</sup> For empirical research which draws favourably on these ideas of Munt, see Desforges (1998) who finds that British travellers to South America frame the 'Third World' as a place to be collected, and bring it back home as cultural capital with which to narrate new identities. For empirical research more critical of Munt's paper, see May (1996a) who finds that, for members of London's new cultural class, gender and life-cycle are as important as class fraction in shaping individual travel experiences.

Further down the same page, one of them continues: “It’s not my impression that tourists give a shit about whether the site is real or unreal, true or false, as long as something tastes good, fills the stomach, warms the skin and melts the troubled mind into a flow of sensual thoughts and feelings”. They make three points. First, for many of us, what makes holidays different from everyday life at home is not practices of gazing, which we do much of the time, but other bodily practices such as singing and dancing, which we only do rarely, usually on holiday. Second, for many of us, holidays are first and foremost about bodily pleasures: tasty food and warm sunshine. Third, though the gaze is important, it is always attached to the eye, and the eye to the body. Recalling a lazy afternoon on the beach, pop-philosopher Alain de Botton makes this last point beautifully (2002: 19-20):

I may have noticed a few birds careering through the air in matinal excitement, but my awareness of them was weakened by a number of other, incongruous and unrelated elements, among these, a sore throat that I had developed during the flight, a worry at not having informed a colleague that I would be away, a pressure across both temples and a rising need to visit the bathroom. A momentous but until then overlooked fact was making its first appearance: that I had inadvertently brought myself with me to the island.

He emphasises that our gazing eyes are always intimately tied to the rest of our bodies; that tiredness, indigestion, anxiety, the irritations of heat or flies – the everyday realities of tourism – play havoc with the tourist gaze.

Edensor (1998) takes this argument a step further. If the gaze is attached to the eye, and the eye to the body, then the body is also attached to the situation, is located in space and time. Following Sibley’s (1988) model of purified spaces (strongly circumscribed and framed) and heterogeneous spaces (allowing of mingling and encounters), Edensor suggests that tourist spaces are regulated differently. He identifies enclavic tourist spaces: organised, restrictive, cut off from locals, shielded from sounds and smells, commodified, single-function, privatised, bounded, distinct, safe, familiar, staged, prescriptive, interpreted, rigid, guided, predictable, themed, likely to result in perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices, offering limited potential to reflexive human agents with alternative, oppositional, subversive readings and practices. And he identifies heterogeneous tourist spaces: multi-functional, hybrid, sensually rich, bewildering and confusing, encouraging of improvisation, power-full in many ways but

loosely policed, affording of chance meetings, confrontations, minglings, encounters and dialogues. He acknowledges that most real tourist spaces are hybrids, a combination of enclavic and heterogeneous tourist spaces. But he also argues that the more enclavic a tourist space, the more it is designed for gazing and nothing else (the more it is deodorised and smothered with muzak). Conversely, the more heterogeneous a tourist space, the more sensually rich it is. On the street, in crowds, gazing is clearly important, but so are haptic geographies (textures and temperatures), olfactory geographies or smellscapes (sweets and savouries), and soundscapes (volumes and rhythms).

If different tourist spaces foreground or background the tourist gaze, then so do different tourist practices. This is the argument of Cloke and Perkins (1998), whose subject of study is adventure tourism in New Zealand. The metaphor of the tourist gaze, which they note is largely generalised from the UK experience where tourists spend much time viewing heritage sites, is inappropriate and unproductive in this context. Adventure tourism practices are embodied. They involve seeing, but also being, doing, touching, tasting, feeling, and so on. Cloke and Perkins describe adrenaline pumping, weak knees, giggling and grinning, hearts pounding, gibbering wrecks. They offer another metaphor in place of the tourist gaze: the tourist performance. They write that “tourists as performers are gazers *and* active beings [...] with all the connotations of the active body, heightened sensory experience, risk, vulnerability, passion, pleasure, mastery and/or failure” (p201).

My final critic of Urry’s tourist gaze thesis is Löfgren (1999). On the beach, Löfgren notes that we expose ourselves to the gaze of others, and we gaze ourselves, perfecting different ocular techniques (watching, staring, glancing, scanning, looking away), but also, of equal importance, we expose ourselves to the sun, water, wind and sand. He suggests that the gaze is hegemonic in our tourism narratives, because we have the words to describe it and the technologies to capture it, but not necessarily in our tourism practices (p85):

In our narratives we also depend heavily on the well-developed language for describing visual impressions that many of the other senses lack. And we are, of course, not just

looking: other senses interact in the making of a vision. It is only that the other senses have not kept up with this verbalisation and technologisation of the visual.

And Löfgren goes a step further than most critics of Urry, by not confining his comments to the tourist gaze as narrow metaphor, and commenting on the tourist gaze as broad thesis of cultural changes and the restructuring of tourism. He suggests that standardised marketing during the modern period did not mean that tourists were standardised. And he charges many views expressed in discussions of postmodern tourism with ahistoricism, suggesting that “novel concepts and trends like post-tourism, ‘event management’, eco-tourism, or heritage industries may in a longer perspective turn out to be oscillations within a rather stable structure” (p8). This focus on historical continuity and difference among active tourists leads me to the fourth and final line of debate reviewed in this chapter.

## **2.5 Over 200 years of holiday practices**

In recent years, some commentators have sought to highlight how tourists are too often portrayed as standard and passive consumers in the tourism literature. In 1998, Edensor noted that our knowledge of tourism is almost exclusively informed by research on the particular tourist practices and settings of Western, middle-class subjects. At the Taj Mahal, he explored what different tourists do (tourist practices) and think (tourist narratives), from the assumption that tourism involves different, active, on-going, ever-changing processes. In other words, there is no one fundamental motivation for tourism (authenticity, novelty, signs, whatever). Rather, there are a range of tourist practices and epistemologies, which emerge out of distinctive cultural locations, diverse historical contexts, and particular geographical settings. And in 1999, Crouch suggested that it was time to rethink tourism, from product to process or practice (always worked at, refigured, contested and negotiated), and the tourist, from consumer to human being (always active, creative, expressive and imaginative). He acknowledged that human beings are socialised, but chose to emphasise freedom, since human beings become more reflexive with time, and many tourist sites remain ‘loose’, affording informal play and self-

organisation<sup>14</sup>. He also chose to emphasise some positive outcomes of tourism: knowledge, transformation, empowerment, friendships, built identities, refigured selves. These choices bring me to the first of two histories of holidaying I wish to review in this final section of Chapter 2: Fred Inglis's (2000) *The Delicious History of the Holiday*.<sup>15</sup>

Inglis acknowledges how some people can't afford a holiday, how others abuse it and exploit their hosts, how tourism dollars rarely trickle down to the needful bearers of tourism's costs, and how package tours might do little for us<sup>16</sup>. But he insists on celebrating holidays as one of the triumphs of consumer capitalism, for the happiness, fulfillment and satisfaction they give us, for the moral and political goods which come from mingling, because on holiday we compare other lives, make new friends, and learn new stories. Inglis also frames his holiday makers as consumers, and acknowledges that the margins of freedom are narrow and the manacles of social structure are heavy, as Marxists teach. But he insists on defining consumers as complex human beings involved in economic and social exchanges, sometimes decisive, sometimes anxious, sometimes childish, sometimes reasonable, sometimes loving, sometimes mean-minded, full of energy to experience happiness, beauty, new places and people<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> One example of tourists imagined as passive consumers is Britton's (1991) paper on tourism as an avenue for capitalist accumulation, in which he argues tourism is capitalistically organised and therefore driven by the inherent and defining social dynamics of capitalism. Also, at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, I sat through a number of papers which described tourist sites in terms of their design and then commented on the many ways in which tourists are duped by them (but never researchers). I sometimes wonder if, as researchers, we underestimate tourists because it costs time and money to leave websites and brochures in offices and actually visit tourist sites, and for long enough not just to site/sight-see, ironically, but also to experience tourism ourselves, and to speak with tourists themselves.

<sup>15</sup> There are, of course, many more than two histories of holidaying in our libraries. The Grand Tour (Black 1985, Hibbert 1987, Chard 1999), the seaside (Walton 1983) and Thomas Cook (Pudney 1953, Piers 1991, Smith 1999) in particular have been widely studied. I choose to limit my focus to just two texts, by Löfgren (1999) and Inglis (2000), however, because my interest is not in histories of holidaying *per se*, but in the specific ways in which Löfgren and Inglis draw links between tourisms of the past and tourisms of the present.

<sup>16</sup> Other common complaints include how tourism stupefies the people (a common Marxian line), and how tourists misrepresent and so produce countries such as India as places of poverty (see Hutnyk 1996).

<sup>17</sup> For my own personal tastes, in his celebrations Inglis goes too far. His text begins by describing "the satisfying patter of heavy rain on the windows" where he works (p3). He writes of backpackers that "In the long aftermath of what came to be called the hippie trail, this generation acquired and wore an attractive and smiling indifference to bad luck and acute discomfort in order not to allow inconvenience to obstruct access to the foreign land and its inhabitants they had come to see but not to stare at, to live among without difference and, above all, without exploitation, status, privilege, all they'd left behind" (pp148-9). He records "the easy-going egalitarianism of the departure lounge" (p180), with no mention of gated club and first class zones. And he notes that "occasionally a team of godlike aircrew pace by, the women trundling



His central argument comes in two parts. First, the sensibility of today's holiday makers – our thoughts, passions, values, imaginings – is not primal. It has been formed, shaped, contrived, from the literal stories our parents and teachers tell us, and from the many lived, embodied narratives (biographies, social roles) society offers us; all of which Spufford calls “imaginative compost” (1997, cited in Inglis 2000: 77). Second, the sensibility of today's holiday makers is differential. We may find common narrative tropes among holiday makers, since we give form to or make sense of experience by working within society's existing narratives. But we also find individuality, because we don't simply enter the narratives society offers us. Rather, we voluntarily, variously, selectively combine from a diverse and almost infinite stock of exemplary lives or heroes (James Boswell, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Phileas Fogg, Robinson Crusoe) and inflect each one in our own way, to suit ourselves.

His story is one of travel narratives. It begins in the eighteenth century. Burke wrote of the sublime (that which is masculine, fearsome and massive about the Lake District or the Alps) and the beautiful (that which is feminine, soft and delicate about the English garden). Rosa painted the sublime and Claude the beautiful. Gilpin wrote of the picturesque. And through their romantic endeavours, with others (Turner, Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Milton, Pope, Ruskin), they taught those embarking on the first Grand Tours (to Italy's classical antiquity for education and history, to the buildings and paintings of Rome and Florence for aesthetic purposes, to the healthy salt waters of Carlsbad and Aix) what to see and feel. In the nineteenth century, Thomas Cook, whose first chartered railway excursion left Leicester for Loughborough in 1841, organised trips tracing the route of the Grand Tour, or to Brighton for the upper classes, and Blackpool for the lower classes (following the Factory Act of 1833, the Bank Holiday Act of 1871, and communications from the scientific community about sea air, salt water and their curative potential). Also of the nineteenth century were grand hotels with formal dining, country cottages or holiday homes with picnics (after Wordsworth and Thoreau made simplicity, asceticism and solitude fashionable), wasteful sports and pointless games (a

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little wheeled suitcases behind them, their uniforms pleasantly implying the discipline of the armed forces” (p181), with no recognition that such a sentence could only be written by a man.

critique of capitalist values). Finally, the twentieth century: holiday camps (Butlins); the Ramblers Association; the Mediterranean and particularly the Cote d'Azur (popularised by hedonistic Bohemians such as Baudelaire and light-seeking artists such as Picasso); sex tourism, practised by soldiers and administrators of empire, in Saigon, Jakarta, Seoul, Singapore (in the tradition of paintings by Gauguin, writings by Lawrence and Conrad, and the actions of Boswell and Byron); backpacking on the hippie trail, in the footsteps of new chiliasts and millenarians, the Woodstock generation, attracted by Buddhism, Hinduism and Sufism as critiques of the deadly rationalities of science and the deadly acquisitiveness of capitalism.

Inglis foregrounds literal stories and lived, embodied narratives in a way that few other commentators have either chosen to do or done successfully. An exception here is de Botton (2002). Setting out from the position that “our lives are dominated by a search for happiness” (p9), de Botton follows the paintings of William Hodges to Barbados, the poetry of Wordsworth and the prose of Burke to the Lake District, and the paintings of Van Gogh to southern France, on which he writes (p187):

Our relationship to olive trees can be improved by being directed towards the silver in their leaves or the structure of their branches. New associations can be created around wheat once we are directed to the pathos of this fragile and yet essential crop as its stalks bend their grain-filled heads in the wind. We may find something to appreciate in the skies of Provence once we are told, even in the crudest way, that it is the shade of blue that counts.

De Botton observes that, until the eighteenth century, we travelled abroad to Rome and Naples, the home of poets Virgil and Horace, and painters Poussin and Claude, before discovering the Highlands of Scotland, North Wales, the Wye Valley and the Lake District in the poems of James Thompson, Robert Burns and others, and the paintings of Thomas Gainsborough, George Barrett and others. And he observes that on reaching our destination, anticipating paradise, we experience disappointment when confronted by ordinary images and diluted reality – restaurants, offices, uniform houses, featureless fields (pp14-15):

If we are inclined to forget how much there is in the world besides that which we anticipate, then works of art are perhaps a little to blame, for in them we find the same process of simplification and selection at work as in the imagination. Artistic accounts

involve severe abbreviations of what reality will force upon us [...]. The anticipatory and artistic imaginations omit and compress, they cut away the periods of boredom and direct our attention to critical moments and, without either lying or embellishing, thus lend to life a vividness and a coherence that it may lack in the distracted wooliness of the present.

In other words, focusing on the nature of travel narratives (as simplified, selective, abbreviated, artistic, compressed, directive accounts) helps to explain the disappointment so often experienced by tourists on arrival at their destination.

The second study I wish to review in this final section on historical continuity, enjoyment and happiness, diverse tourist practices, and active human beings is Orvar Löfgren's (1999) *On Holiday*. Löfgren sets out from the position that he himself is a tourist, with photos in his basement, and a summerhouse for daydreaming. This leads him to conceive of tourists as unique, capable and diverse individuals. On studies which seek to classify tourists, he writes (p267):

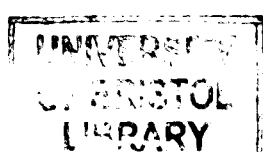
Vacationers, however, continue to move in and out of such neat boxes and juggle or discard various mindsets and interests. A main attraction of being on holiday is that there is a possibility to choose among a great many activities or mental states, between sightseeing, shopping, dozing on the beach, going for a walk, reading a novel, or having too many Tequila Sunrises.

To studies which characterise tourists as all serious and in search of something (authenticity, novelty, signs), he offers two literary models (after Urbain 1991): the male and middle-class Phileas Fogg, ardent traveller in search of new sights; and Robinson Crusoe, who takes pleasure in getting away from it all, relaxing, building a new life. And for studies which point to the new in contemporary tourism, he provides "an archaeology of the present" (p7), a story of "two centuries in the making of tourist experiences and sensibilities" (p7), detailing eighteenth century Grand Tours, railways, spa towns and seaside resorts; nineteenth century walking clubs, car tours and camp grounds; and twentieth century summerhouses, Hawaii and the Mediterranean.

As with Inglis, travel narratives are important for Löfgren. *On Holiday* begins with the story of two eighteenth century travellers. Linnaeus set out in 1732, travelling to study and for commerce, in search of facts. Linnerhielm set out in 1787, travelling to see, in

search of paintable landscapes and picturesque views. In the 50 years separating them, art had taught Linnerhielm where and how to see landscape. The idea of the sublime had travelled from philosophy, through art history, to tourism. Numerous discursive fields inhabit Löfgren's text. Spa towns and coastal settlements followed eighteenth century medical discourse. Initially, such places were heavily regimented and hierarchical. Sea bathing was for medicinal purposes only. Women, especially, were subject to rules of privacy and modesty, their behaviour restricted to quiet strolls and sunset watching. Then, in the late nineteenth century, artists redefined the seashore from chaotic to harmonious. And, in the early twentieth century, music and films from Hawaii, depicting hula girls and palm trees, re-presented the beach as tropical paradise. Disciplined sea bathing gave way to modern beach culture: surfing, tanned bodies, parties.

As with Inglis, travel narratives are important, but for Löfgren, so is the materiality of holidays: bodies and props. Linnerhielm didn't just travel with poems. He carried drawing pads, notebooks, a watercolour set, a telescope, a cliche-glass. Half a century earlier, by contrast, Linnaeus had packed papers for pressing flowers and making sketches, a looking glass, a list of the region's plants, a microscope, a measuring rod. Löfgren is interested in what happens after we follow paintings, poems and scientific theories to places; the rules, habits and everyday practices of vacationing. For example, he frames late nineteenth century coastal communities as new emotional spaces, experimental zones, where people questioned, stretched and transgressed the norms and routines of bourgeois city life. Adults relearned the art of being childish and playful. New rhythms and movements emerged: clocktime became less important, bodies loafed and pottered. A cult of simplicity, naturalness and informality arose, accompanied by a new aesthetic: white and light colours, informal dress, bare feet and kitchens (and increased toil for women). Summerhouses provided a place where people could explore a different side to themselves, their relations with others and with nature: a laboratory or training ground. On the beach, new forms of body consciousness appeared. People rubbed each other with lotion and exposed themselves to strangers. The modern body was made.



## 2.6 Conclusion

This argument of Löfgren's, that contemporary tourists draw on over two centuries of travel narratives, but also equipped and trained bodies, is a convincing one. But so are many of the arguments reviewed in this chapter. The purpose of this conclusion, then, is not to position myself with one or other theorist or theory. Rather, it is to pick and mix from the research presented above, and construct a baseline or set of maxims from which to proceed with my own study of (working) holiday makers. My first maxim, then, is that there is no one motivation for tourism; not pseudo-events, not authenticity, not novelty, not gazing on landscapes and townscapes, not social differentiation. Diverse tourist sensibilities and practices arise out of particular social, historical and geographical settings. The second maxim is that this does not mean that some of the texts reviewed above have nothing to offer us. Boorstin has much to teach us about those occasions when specific tourists (often American) search out pseudo-events. MacCannell has much to teach us about those occasions when specific tourists (Western, middle-class) search out authenticity (and find only staged authenticity). Cohen has much to teach us about those occasions when specific tourists search out novelty (from the security of an environmental bubble). Urry has much to teach us about those specific tourists (often British) in search of landscapes and townscapes to gaze upon. And Munt has much to teach us about those specific tourists (the new petite bourgeoisie) struggling to establish and maintain social differentiation. The third maxim is that the body is important in tourism. Often what makes holidays different from everyday life at home is what we do with our bodies (over-eating, over-drinking, dancing and singing, swimming and sun-bathing). Some tourist practices are overwhelmingly about performing bodies and bodily pleasures (adventure tourism). And even when gazing, the eye is always attached to the body, which plays havoc with the tourist gaze. The fourth is that space is important in tourism. Strongly circumscribed tourist spaces encourage gazing from a distance and little else. Weakly circumscribed tourist spaces encourage mingling, confrontation, dialogue, and senses other than sight. The fifth maxim is that there *are* some conditions that most tourists are subject to, so we can identify patterns of tourism. Modern tourism arose out of certain conditions (high levels of employment, rapid urbanisation, development of the railways etc.). Postmodern tourism arose out of certain new

conditions (horizontal and vertical de-differentiation). The sixth is that we must be careful with typologies and claims of changes and restructuring. Tourists have never been standard or passive consumers. They have always contested and refigured patterns of tourism, as unique and creative human beings. Also, many contemporary tourist sensibilities and practices can be explained with reference to the past 200 years, to travel narratives and equipped and trained bodies. And my seventh and final maxim is that tourism is double-edged. Some of us can't afford it. Some of us abuse it and exploit our hosts. Highly organised package tours do little for some of us. But holidays bring many of us happiness, satisfaction and fulfillment. They encourage mingling, through which we compare lives, make new friends and learn new stories.

I conclude this chapter by returning to the work of John Urry. In recent books, Urry has linked tourism to travel, mobility and globalisation. He argues that contemporary Western societies are now organised around mass mobility (of people, cultures and objects), so tourism is significant, emblematic, centre-stage within these societies (Rojek and Urry 1997). He discusses the tourist (alongside the nomad, vagabond and pilgrim) as a metaphor for postmodern times (Urry 2000). And he frames tourists as some of the countless mobilities (physical, imaginative, virtual, voluntary, coerced) in the world, and writes that "there are not two separate entities, the 'global' and 'tourism' bearing some external connections with each other. Rather they are part and parcel of the same set of complex and interconnected processes" (Urry 2002a: 144).

Just recently, these themes of Urry's later work have been developed admirably by Franklin (2003). For Franklin, there are too many general theories of tourism, and tourism is too often viewed as: confined to resorts and destinations on the social margin, away from the everyday lifeworld of work and home; travel to the pleasures of the unusual and the different; simplistic, insignificant and decorative; and destructive, unsustainable and damaging. He locates MacCannell's thesis, that tourism involves travel to the pleasures of the authentic, in the mid-1970s when it was written; a time when many people first travelled outside of their nation-states, and contrasted the seemingly simple 'east' with the modernised 'west', the liquid nature of which they had yet to accept or find exciting. And he locates Urry's tourist gaze thesis, that tourism is

primarily visual, spectacular, passive, shallow, superficial and fleeting, in the late 1980s when it was written; a time when theories of panopticism and hyperreality were popular.

I take three interconnected points from Franklin's text. First, tourists can be serious and passionate, and tourism leaves important traces and consequences. It is a central component of identity formation and transformation. It is productive of *communitas* (a unique bond between travellers). It is productive of cosmopolitan and metropolitan mentalities. And it was primarily and intricately involved in the establishment of modernity, in that it helped us develop our restless interest in the world, in things new and exotic, which is essential to modern consumer society, and it helped us develop our access to and confidence in the world, which are essential to open markets, international peace, knowledge economies etc. The second point is that tourism is infused or blended into the everyday. It is one of the ways in which consumers orient themselves or take a stance to a globalised world. It is a mode of relating to the world, an attitude to the world, in postmodern cultures. It is the nomadic manner in which we attempt to make sense of and enjoy modernity. After all, the everyday world is touristic (mobile, spectacular, exotic). Most places are touristic (full of commodities, musics, foods, styles and peoples). And most leisure activities are touristic (shopping, walking etc.). The third point is that tourism is embodied, active, performative, muscular. Urry's tourist gaze thesis described a tourism of imperialism, romantic idealism, and post-Enlightenment emphasis on the cognitive, mental and intellectual. Franklin describes a tourism of contemporary times characterised by: consumerism, globalisation and mobility; disaffection with science and machines; and a generalised concern with exercise and fitness. He describes a tourism of escape, not from boring, dull, repetitive, meaningless life, but from fast time, from information, stimulation and stress, to slow time, the time of nature and the body, the present moment, through techniques of the body – surfing, climbing etc. – which involve familiarity, continuity, repetition and return, and so can produce knowledge of and attachments to nature.

With cosmopolitans, nomads and fast time in mind, I now turn to the second literature which provides a context for my research: globalisation, transnationalism, mobility.

## CHAPTER 3: GLOBALISATION, TRANSNATIONALISM, MOBILITY

### 3.1 Introduction

Tourists are some of the countless mobilities in the world (Urry 2002a). In addition, WHMs are more than tourists. This is the title of the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration report referred to in Chapter 1: *Working Holiday Makers: More than Tourists* (1997). The report is concerned with labour market effects, but its title could equally apply to other aspects of the WHP. In Chapter 1, I report on WHMs who leave jobs and sell or rent houses and businesses before travelling to Australia. I note that a few carry suitcases and lap-tops rather than backpacks. I describe the particular materiality of working holidays: tax file numbers, medicare cards, furniture, photoframes, houseplants. And I write of work in Australia as important to social life (work colleagues) and future opportunities (sponsorship of four-year residency via the 457 visa).

So the second literature I use to contextualise this project is what I call globalisation, transnationalism, mobility. Again, this chapter is not a comprehensive review of what is a vast literature, but a selective review of those texts I find most interesting and relevant. I begin by setting out the arguments of three influential globalisation theorists: David Harvey, Anthony Giddens and Manuel Castells. These arguments are important in their own right, not least because they characterise globalising modernity as dialectical or double-edged. But they are also important because they gave rise to a decade of debate through the 1990s, and eventually provoked two alternative imaginings of our seemingly interconnected world: transnationalism and mobility. A critical review of this debate and these two alternative imaginings takes us from Harvey, Giddens and Castells to the end of this chapter.



## 3.2 Globalisation

### 3.2.1 David Harvey (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*

Capital is a process, not a thing. It is a process of reproduction of social life through commodity production, in which all of us in the advanced capitalist world are heavily implicated. Its internalised rules of operation are such as to ensure that it is a dynamic and revolutionary mode of social organisation, restlessly and ceaselessly transforming the society in which it is embedded. The process masks and fetishises, achieves growth through creative destruction, creates new wants and needs, exploits the capacity for human labour and desire, transforms spaces and speeds up the pace of life. It produces problems of overaccumulation for which there are but a limited number of possible solutions.

Through these mechanisms capitalism creates its own distinctive historical geography.

(Harvey 1989: 343)

The subtitle to *The Condition of Postmodernity* is *An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. It is not explicitly a study of globalisation. In fact, the word globalisation does not appear once in the entire text. Having said that, what Harvey is really concerned with is postmodernism as a product of what he calls time-space compression, a concept which has become closely associated with globalisation in the literature over the last decade or so. The text is not simply an enquiry into the origins of cultural change but also an “historical geography of the experience of space and time in social life”, a study of globalisation and its effects (p327).

For Harvey, what determines globalisation is capitalism’s historical-geographical development. At times of overaccumulation, capitalism embarks upon drives to reduce the turnover time of capital and to search out new markets. Time saving developments in the processes of production and consumption demand equivalent developments in the circulation of goods and services. The result is time-space compression or “the annihilation of space through time” (p205). Harvey identifies three major rounds of time-space compression since the dawn of capitalism. The first was the period centred around the depression of 1846-7. The second was the period from 1850 to the First World War, when new systems of credit and corporate forms of organisation, new systems of distribution (department stores), and technical and organisational innovations in production (fragmentation and specialisation), exemplified by Ford’s assembly line

erected in 1913, helped speed up the circulation time of capital and led to investment in the conquest of space: expansion of the railway network and steam shipping, building of the Suez canal etc. The third major round of time-space compression identified by Harvey is the contemporary period, defined by a transition in the regime of accumulation and mode of social and political regulation from Fordist-Keynsian to flexible accumulation and neoconservatism-entrepreneurialism-postmodernism. Flexible accumulation refers to new organisational forms and new technologies in production: organisational shifts towards vertical disintegration (subcontracting and outsourcing), just-in-time delivery, technologies of electronic control, small-batch production etc. Associated developments in transport and communication this round include reduction in airfreight rates, developments in shipping (containerisation), and developments in information and communications technology.

Harvey identifies two opposing and always present reactions to time-space compression and the crises in the experience of time and space that result. The first is what he calls the (modernist) project of ethics and Becoming. As the world seemingly shrinks, people experience a sense of unity and think and act on a global scale. For the period leading up to the First World War, Harvey identifies Le Corbusier and his internationalist project of individual liberty and freedom through the construction of highly ordered and rationalised space as an example of this reaction. For the contemporary period, Harvey struggles to find evidence of such a project although the environmental movement receives mention. The second reaction is the (postmodernist) project of aesthetics and Being. Globalisation produces in people a sense of confusion, disorientation and powerlessness. This may be expressed in a number of ways. Some people choose to affirm difference, giving rise to nationalism (geopolitics) and localism (parochialism), based on tradition, notions of authenticity and of the past more generally. It seems that at the same time Le Corbusier was being heroic in Switzerland and France, Heidegger and the National Socialists were being quite the opposite in Germany, searching in a reactionary way for “secure moorings in a shifting world” (p302). Other people choose (intellectual) postmodernism, associated by Harvey with Lyotard and read as either nihilism or people taking advantage of all the divergent possibilities and escaping to a world of fantasy.

Alongside these projects, two other products of globalisation identified by Harvey are worthy of note here. First, as technologies shrink space, capital becomes increasingly mobile and thus increasingly sensitised to what the world's spaces contain (specific quantities and qualities of labour, for example). This results in what Harvey calls a "geography of devaluation" (deindustrialisation of some spaces and industrialisation of others, p294), and the active production of (serial, recursive, monotonous) spaces by urban elites. Second, products and cultures become internationalised. Cities become emporiums of the world's commodities and collages in which different cultures hang loosely together.

So what is the trajectory of this globalised world? Harvey imagines a world in which two sides (good and evil?) fight it out: geopolitics and economic nationalism, localism and the politics of place on the one side, a new internationalism on the other. As we have become accustomed to expect, where Harvey stands in this battle is quite clear. He advocates a return to realism and ethics, a renewal of historical materialism and the Enlightenment project, and a counter attack of ethics against aesthetics and *Becoming* against *Being*.

### 3.2.2 *Anthony Giddens (1990) The Consequences of Modernity*

Giddens' project is an institutional analysis of modernity. Globalisation is a pivotal character in his story however, because, according to Giddens, modernity is inherently globalising. He gives us two possible definitions of globalisation. First, the global spread of the institutions of modernity: capitalism, industrialism, surveillance and military power. Second, and this is the one he chooses to develop, the high and rising level of time-space distanciation or stretching of social relations over space. For Giddens, globalisation may thus be defined as "the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (p64).

In opposition to Harvey, structuring of globalisation is multi-dimensional in this text. At the dawn of modernity, the invention and diffusion of the mechanical clock and the establishment of uniformity in the social organisation of time allowed time to be emptied. Subsequently, the development of disembedding mechanisms – symbolic tokens (money, for example) and expert systems – allowed space to be emptied, to be separated from place. The combined emptying of time and space into standardised dimensions allowed time-space distancing or globalisation to occur. The motors driving globalisation were and remain restless capitalism and the reflexive appropriation of knowledge that, according to Giddens, is unique to modernity<sup>18</sup>. Enabling and restricting factors include the other three institutions of modernity: industrialism, surveillance (or the nation-state), and military power. For example, the movement from commodity money, material coinage, to money proper involved the state as guarantor of value, as enabler. However, nation-states are not governed purely by economic considerations, and other considerations can position them as restrictive forces on the development of globalisation. States are actors, “jealous of their territorial rights, concerned with fostering national cultures, and having strategic geopolitical involvements with other states” (p72).

Many of the effects of globalisation identified by Harvey and mentioned above are present in Giddens’ text: disorientation, intellectual postmodernism, feelings of powerlessness (used to explain the decline of Keynesian economic policies), uneven development (deindustrialisation and industrialisation), and the reconceptualisation of place as phantasmagoric (i.e. distanced relations determine its nature). In addition, Giddens deals notably well with the incredible complexity of globalisation’s effects, which he characterises as dialectical or double-edged. Disembedding mechanisms are dependent upon trust and security. Trust, as opposed to confidence, is in turn dependent upon the existence of risk and danger. The modern, globalised world exhibits novel forms of risk such as ecological disaster and nuclear war. These high consequence, low probability risks produce in people a sense of foreboding and a new sense of fate.

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<sup>18</sup> Giddens defines this reflexive appropriation of knowledge as “the reflexive ordering and reordering of social relations in the light of continual inputs of knowledge affecting the actions of individuals and groups” (p17).

Giddens identifies four adaptive reactions to such risks: pragmatic acceptance, sustained optimism, cynical pessimism and radical engagement. The couplets here are already numerous: trust and risk, security and danger, privatism and engagement. Other dialectical responses to globalisation identified by Giddens include the following set of four. First, one-worldism or centralisation (globalisation pulls upwards) is evident alongside assertions of sovereignty and regional cultural identity and movements for local autonomy (globalisation pushes downwards). Second, reembedding is evident alongside disembedding. The effectiveness of expert systems as disembedding mechanisms, as technologies that enable the lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction, is dependent upon trust. Trust must be reproduced by facework commitments, by social connections established in circumstances of co-presence, by performance: the gaze, bodily posture, gesture, the conventions of orthodox conversation. Third, reverse colonisation, where non-western countries influence developments in the West, is evident alongside Westernisation or Americanisation (the Latinising of Los Angeles, for example). And fourth, a transformation of intimacy is evident alongside the impersonality of trust in abstract systems. Humans have a psychological need to find others to trust. Trust in persons is no longer facilitated by local community or kinship network. Trust becomes a project, to be worked at, to be won. It demands the opening out of the individual to the Other, a mutual process of self-disclosure. Self-realisation is central to this process of discovery. Giddens explains the apparent turn inward of recent decades, to self-identity and ego, in these terms.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991), Giddens develops many of these ideas (feelings of powerlessness, fatalism, pragmatic acceptance, cynical pessimism, the transformation of intimacy, self-disclosure). His focus is the link between extensionality (globalising forces) and intensionality (personal dispositions and feelings); the way in which globalising modernity radically alters the nature of day-to-day social life and impacts upon the most intimately personal aspects of our experience; the new mechanisms of self-identity which emerge from, are shaped by, and shape the structuring institutions of globalising modernity. He suggests that in this post-traditional order, with the globalisation of media and the pluralisation of life worlds (the stable setting of local community is replaced by diverse and segmented settings), social status is no longer fixed and highly relevant to identity, tradition and habit no longer order life within set channels, so identity becomes a reflexively organised endeavour, a project of work and learning, an active intervention involving the sustaining or living of coherent yet continuously revised biographical narratives, autobiographies, stories about the self (about where we have come from and where we are going). Self-identity involves exploration, construction, transformation, day-to-day decisions, multiple choice lifestyles (routinised practices of dress, eating, acting and milieux which give material form to narratives).

“The juggernaut – a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which threatens to rush out of control and which could render itself asunder” (p139). This, along with the phrase “runaway world”, is how Giddens describes globalising modernity’s trajectory. We cannot turn back; established technical knowledge cannot be eradicated. Neither can we fully control our movement forward, for four reasons: the reflexivity or circularity of social knowledge, differential power, values, and unintended consequences. What we can do is pursue life politics, support social movements and the more compassionate policies of national governments, business corporations and international organisations. In the mean time, Giddens expects a more co-ordinated global political order to emerge to deal with those issues which increasingly cut across states.

### 3.2.3 Manuel Castells (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society*

The topology defined by networks determines that the distance (or intensity or frequency of interaction) between two points (or social positions) is shorter (or more frequent, or more intense) if both points are nodes in a network than if they do not belong to the same network. On the other hand, within a given network, flows have no distance, or the same distance, between nodes. Thus, distance (physical, social, economic, political, cultural) for a given point or position varies between zero (for any node in the same network) and infinite (for any point external to the network).

(Castells 1996: 501)

*The Rise of the Network Society* is the first of three volumes comprising Castells’ *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. The objective of all three volumes is to determine the structure and processes that characterise informational societies. Volume I deals with the logic of the Net and very closely with globalisation.

Castells is very specific in his definition of globalisation. For him, not everything in the economy is global. Most production, employment and firms are and will remain local and regional. Having said that, the dominant activities of the economy are interdependent or globalised. Such activities or segments include financial markets, trade (a large proportion of which is no longer between countries, firms or even branches of the same multinational corporation but rather between networks of semi-autonomous units, the geography of which is often transnational), some production, and speciality labour.

Castells' point is that these strategic components permeate, impact upon, diffuse throughout all other spheres of society. Economies depend on their globalised core. Capital from financial markets is invested globally in all sectors of activity (media, agriculture, health, education). Thus Castells speaks of a global economy which is not a planetary economy but which has "planetary reach" (p132).

Castells' starting point for globalisation is the technological revolution which occurred in a particular segment of American society in the 1970s. He differs from Harvey in asserting that this revolution was related in the first instance, not to capitalism's drive to reduce turnover times and to seek out new markets, but to the culture of individual freedom and innovation that grew out of American campuses in the 1960s and to the US Defense Department Advanced Research Projects Agency (within which the Internet was developed to prevent the destruction of American communications in the event of nuclear war). He does acknowledge that, from the very first moment of their diffusion, these technologies were appropriated by a capitalist class whose requirements became the key factor in their development (acceleration, channelling, shaping) over the next 30 or so years. But he does not share with Harvey the view of society as made up of superimposed levels, "with technology and economy in the basement, power on the mezzanine, and culture in the penthouse" (p26). For Castells, the importance of institutions in the development of the network society or the globalised world did not stop at American state-led technological innovation. Deregulation of domestic economic activity and liberalisation of international trade and investment were policies deliberately implemented by governments (particularly those which made up the G-7) and international institutions (the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO) and which induced or constituted globalisation.

In terms of responses elicited by globalisation, many of the usual suspects are present in Castells' story: psychological insecurity, the primacy of identity, postmodern culture and theory, crisis of the nation state as sovereign entity. There are three effects with which Castells deals particularly well. First, mobile capital, which increasingly exists in a "space of flows", is empowered in relation to fixed labour, which remains in a "space of places" and, in addition, has become individualised through practices of outsourcing and

subcontracting, and fragmented into productive knowledge workers and expendable, generic labour (p506). Second, stratification and social exclusion occur, evident as uneven development, not only between North and South but also between the dynamic segments and territories of societies everywhere and their Others. Castells describes the process of social exclusion in the following terms: “global networks of instrumental exchanges selectively switch on and off individuals, groups, regions, and even countries, according to their relevance in fulfilling the goals processed in the network” (p3). He identifies the products of social exclusion as “black holes of human misery” (p2) and fundamentalism or “the logic of excluding the excluders [...]”. When the Net switches off the self, the self, individual or collective, constructs its meaning without global, instrumental reference: the process of disconnection becomes reciprocal” (p24). The third point is this: impacts of globalisation are mediated through culture, history and institutions to produce specificity. Castells thus speaks of “informational societies” as opposed to “informational society” (p20).

For Castells, globalisation is set and will accelerate over time, penetrating all countries, all territories, all cultures. This is because the global economy is now a network of interconnected segments of economies (p147):

Once such a network is constituted, any node that disconnects itself is simply bypassed, and resources (capital, information, technology, goods, services, skilled labour) continue to flow to the rest of the network. Any individual decoupling from the global economy implies a staggering cost.

So what of the future? Like Harvey, Castells imagines a binary future: the rise of tribes founded on resistance identity (communes of resistance, religious fundamentalism, ethnic separatism) verses the resurrection of (egalitarian) families (the family as “rock in this swirling ocean” p378), founded on project identity (currently evident in such concepts as sustainable development and human rights).

#### *3.2.4 The 1990s, a decade of debate*

These and other stories of globalisation initiated much debate through the 1990s across the social sciences. Held *et al* (1999) identify three positions in this debate: the



hyperglobalisers, the sceptics and the transformationalists. Harvey, Giddens and Castells occupy the last of these positions. They see globalisation as a long-term historical process, as the central driving force behind rapid and historically unprecedented social, political and economic changes, and as producing new patterns of stratification and new configurations of governance. Before continuing my discussion of this transformationalist position, I deal briefly with the hyperglobalisers and sceptics.

Ohmae (1995) exemplifies the hyperglobalisers. He holds that we live in a new era where peoples everywhere are increasingly subject to the disciplines of the global market place and where nation-states are no longer workable as business units. He writes of the demise of the nation-state, of denationalised and borderless economies, and of an emerging global civilisation or civil society with its own mechanisms of governance (the IMF, for example). In response, Amin (1997) writes of sunk costs, and asserts that transnational corporations are not footloose or disembedded from the home-base as a source of strategic assets. And Held *et al* (1999) write of how the impacts of globalisation are mediated through culture, history and institutions, and suggest that the hyperglobalisers mistakenly imagine globalisation as a purely economic phenomenon. Above, we learned from Castells that the global interacts with the local to produce specificity, and from Giddens how nation-states continue to be powerful actors outside of the economic sphere, “jealous of their territorial rights, concerned with fostering national cultures, and having strategic geopolitical involvements with other states” (p72).

Hirst and Thompson (1996) exemplify the sceptics. They tell of an international and internationalising economy made up of national and international companies which generally maintain a national home base, where foreign direct investment (FDI) is highly concentrated among the advanced industrial economies (particularly the regional economies of Europe, North America and Japan), and where international events do not directly or necessarily penetrate the domestic economy but are refracted through national policies and processes. Both Amin (1997) and Burawoy *et al* (2000) point to the problematic way in which Hirst and Thompson construct their argument. They set up an ideal typical conception of globalisation as socially disembedded or decontextualised, a “caricature” (Amin 1997: 124) or “phantom opponent” (Burawoy *et al* 2000: 337), which

they knock down like a straw man, concluding that globalisation is a myth. Held *et al* (1999) identify two flawed assumptions in the work of Hirst and Thompson. First, why should global markets be perfectly competitive for a global economy to exist when national markets in the international economy have always contained imperfections? Second, globalisation can surely have more than one possible (not fixed, not determinate) end condition. Moreover, Amin (1997) notes that, like the hyperglobalisers, the sceptics imagine globalisation in economic terms only, and so fail to account for important social processes: interconnectedness, multiplexity, hybridisation.

I now return to the transformationalists. Debate through the 1990s centred around four points: determination, ethnocentrism, space and place, and trajectory. As regards determination, Harvey's mono-causal approach (globalisation is determined by capitalism's historical-geographical development) was widely criticised. Above, we learned from Castells that the initial stages of technological revolution were culture- and state-led, and only after diffusion of these technologies did development become driven by a capitalist class. And we learned from Giddens that, in addition to restless capitalism, the reflexive appropriation of knowledge drives globalisation, and the other three institutions of modernity (industrialism, surveillance and military power) enable and constrain it. Thinking about determination, Held *et al* (1999) usefully draw on Giddens' earlier work on structuration theory: globalisation is a product of both the individual actions of, and the cumulative actions between, countless agents and institutions.

Turning to ethnocentrism, many commentators have identified among the transformationalists a concentration on connectivity and interdependence at the expense of hierarchy, unevenness, stratification and the experience of globalisation as loss (Massey 1991 and 1994, Leyshon 1995, Marcuse 1997, Held *et al* 1999, Burawoy *et al* 2000). Referring to the BBC Reith Lectures given by Giddens in 1999 from London, Hong Kong, Delhi and Washington, Burawoy *et al* (2000: 337) wonder whether "globalisation talk signifies the privileged lifestyle of high-flying academics". In 1991, Massey identified many problems with Harvey's text, of which I select just three. First, there is an absence of other points of view. For example, Harvey discusses the films *Blue Velvet* and *Bladerunner*, the meanings of which are highly contested, and analyses them

without reference to other voices, particularly those of women concerned with what is arguably a central theme in both films: gender. Second, Harvey uses five pictures to illustrate his discussion of postmodernism. All are of women, yet Harvey makes no comment on this. Third, feminists get little mention in Harvey's text despite having written widely about space, society and modernity, teaching us that modernity privileged vision over the other senses and also distinguished between public and private spaces, privileging the public spaces of men (these two points come together in the figure of the *flâneur*).

In 1994, Massey addressed Harvey's notion of time-space compression again. She stressed that globalisation has a power-geometry (p149):

Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.

She stressed that classes are not the only social groups (p148): "Women's mobility, for instance, is restricted – in a thousand different ways, from physical violence to being ogled at or made to feel quite simply 'out of place' – not by 'capital', but by men". And she stressed that the mobility of some people may be linked to the immobility of others (p150): "Everytime someone uses a car, and thereby increases their personal mobility, they reduce both the social rationale and the financial viability of the public transport system – and thereby also potentially reduce the mobility of those who rely on that system". Such a focus has been taken up by others. Leyshon (1995), for example, notes that communication and transportation technologies have to be paid for, and some people are better able to afford them than others. He writes that "while the world may be shrinking, it is shrinking faster for some people than for others" (p34).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Some of these criticisms seem rather harsh. In writing *The Information Age*, Castells sought to adopt a perspective as plural and global as possible. He lists fieldwork in the USA, Spain, Switzerland, Russia, Bolivia, Mexico, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, South Korea and Japan. The countries of Africa are conspicuously absent, and we cannot know how far Castells ventured from the university campuses on which he was guest, but the list is impressive nevertheless. Giddens makes clear that his comments are limited to "those living in the core geographical areas of modernity" (1991: 30). Harvey responded to the criticisms of Massey and others in a typically combative paper published in 1992; typically combative, but by my reading not entirely convincing. His claim about the pictures of women used to illustrate his discussion of postmodernism, for example, that they were deliberately chosen to highlight the persistent

Massey has much to say about space and place too (1994, 1995). She disagrees with Harvey's claim that globalisation has simultaneously brought about the dissolution of place and the rise of reactionary place-bound politics, although she does not deny the rise of reactionary place-bound politics. Instead, she asks the question: what happens to the notion of place in this age of globalisation? Not so long ago, we imagined place as settled, bounded, coherent, unique, static, pure. But, with intensifying corporeal, imaginative and virtual travel, this becomes increasingly difficult to do. How else might we imagine place? Thinking about her own neighbourhood of Kilburn, and about Castells' notion of the space of flows and the space of places, she suggests the concepts of activity spaces (the spatial network of links and activities, connections and locations, within which individuals operate) and a global or progressive sense of place (place as a point of intersection of activity spaces, a meeting-place, a point of contact). These concepts have been built upon by others. Drawing on research in another neighbourhood of London, Stoke Newington, May (1996b) argues that Massey's notion of a progressive sense of place should be embraced as a worthy political project, but not as a claim about empirically verifiable reality. Among the new cultural class of Stoke Newington, he finds a variety of place identities, both global and bounded, but all reactionary. After Bourdieu (1984), he suggests that this new cultural class, these urban flâneurs, only welcome difference and otherness as objects to be gazed upon or as cultural capital through which to display liberal credentials. He also finds that this new cultural class, these controlling gentrifiers, welcome historical associations (English village charm etc.). The combined effect of these two welcomings is to silence, contain and exclude both minority and working class understandings of the neighbourhood. Albrow (1996, 1997) also builds on the work of Massey and others through research in London, this time in Tooting. He seeks to replace the old language of community (understood as referring to a shared local culture) with a new language of socioscape or globalised locality (the point on the ground where the sociospheres or activity spaces of individuals touch down, where the lifestyles of individuals intersect). He notes that conflict between different lifestyles

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problems faced by women over time, seems weak given that such problems received no mention in the discussion itself.

is minimised through civil inattention and avoidance strategies, and because different people occupy the streets at different times of day (time-space stratification).

As regards trajectory, Giddens has been criticised for his characterisation of globalisation as a “juggernaut” or “runaway world” (1990: 139), and Castells has been criticised for writing of “the uncontrollable logic of markets” and “a world of uncontrolled and confusing change” (1996: 508). Marcuse (1997: 29) labels such accounts “glossy globalisation”. He worries about the consequences of constructing globalisation as benign and inevitable, as do Burawoy *et al* (2000), who detail how stories of globalisation as natural or eternal are used by corporations and governments to justify their self-interested actions. Albrow (1996: 91-2) writes:

There is no inherent logic to globalisation which suggests that a particular outcome necessarily will prevail. Since we are in a world of more or less rather than all or nothing, for the foreseeable future, rather than always or never, there is in the concept of globalisation nothing which ensures its perpetual advance. Both the motives and the technology for developing private and localised worlds, as separate as possible from the teeming billions, are easily conceivable.

He continues: “There is even the open possibility of deglobalisation” (p108). In opposition to the historicism of Giddens and others (who seek laws of history, who seek direction, who see the present as the culmination of the past), Albrow defines globalisation as the historical transformation from one state (divided human relations) to another (interconnected human relations), which is not a process, since it has no driving force and no necessary outcome or end-point, but is rather dependent on extraneous factors such as technological development and the material finitude of the globe.

### **3.3 Transnationalism**

The globalisation debate continues, but, by the late 1990s, critiques of all three positions (hyperglobalisers, sceptics and transformationalists) had opened up space for alternative imaginings of our seemingly interconnected world. It is to one of these alternative imaginings that I now turn: transnationalism. I wish to stress that the literature on transnationalism did not simply appear in the late 1990s as a response to the globalisation debate. It did, however, appear to be given a new lease of life at this time in studies by

Ong (1999), Smith (2001) and others. Before I discuss this new lease of life though, I outline some significant writings on transnationalism from earlier times.

By my reading, one of the first significant writings on transnationalism appeared in 1971 in a special issue of the journal *International Organisation*. In one of a group of papers reflecting on projects which cross borders, Field made the following argument. Since 1800, much of the main business of the world, from the development of a modernity based on freedom, self-determination, liberalism and nationalism, to efforts to eliminate or mitigate the perceived resulting evils, has been transnational in nature. This transnationalism has two notable causes: the market (the industrial revolution produced a split between world city and world farm, and made available European capital for export); and American ideology (steeped in Enlightenment thought and evangelical religion). And it has one notable effect: a world of two cultures, one global and cosmopolitan (the new tribe), the other local, provincial, national (the old tribes). More recently, this line has been taken up by Hannerz (1990), who suggests that people relate to world culture in one of two ways: as cosmopolitans (people who think of their lives within the structure of the globe, who are oriented towards diversity, willing to engage with the Other, competent, skilled, ready to make their way into other cultures); or as locals (people who think of their lives within the structure of the locality or nation, who travel only as tourists, incompetent spectators, assimilating items from elsewhere into local culture). He notes that locals are vital to cosmopolitans because they maintain diversity in the world.

A significant addition to what we might call this early transnationalism literature, centred on the figure of the cosmopolitan, was Arjun Appadurai's (1996) *Modernity at Large*. Appadurai argues that two transnational processes, electronic media and mass migration, driven by economic opportunity, droughts and famines, leisure industries and tourist sites, enabled by the automobile, aeroplane, camera, computer and telephone, offer new resources for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds; produce diasporic public spheres, transnational or even postnational sodalities, and a sense of the global as modern and the modern as global; give rise to new patriotisms (queer nation, the retired, the unemployed, scientists, women) and postnational social forms (multinational

corporations, transnational philanthropic movements, international terrorist organisations, green movements); and place the nation-state “on its last legs” (p19). He gives us a model or general theory of cultural processes or flow. It contains five scapes: ethnoscares (the landscape of tourists, immigrants and other moving people which shoots through that of less mobile people); mediascares (the distribution of electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information); technoscares (the disposition of technologies); financescares (the landscape of global capital); and ideoscares (the distribution of ideologies). The relationship between these scapes is disjunctive, he argues. Each is subject to its own constraints and incentives. The result is deterritorialisation.

Since 1996, Appadurai has been widely criticised for underestimating the structuring power of economic, political and cultural institutions, and for celebrating his own cosmopolitanism. For example, Sparke’s (forthcoming) study of Cascadia, a concept cross-border region or post-national spatial fact on the Pacific Coast of North America transcending the 49th parallel, directly challenges Appadurai’s notions of disjuncture and deterritorialisation. Wondering at Appadurai’s excitement about the opportunities unleashed by the waning of the nation-state, his fascination with borderless movement and post-national networks, Sparke examines the production of locality (Cascadia) in globality by local elites, and finds evidence of conjuncture and reterritorialisation.

In contrast to this old transnationalism literature of cosmopolitanism and deterritorialisation, a new transnationalism literature of flexible citizens, migrant networks and active nation-states has emerged in recent years. I wish to discuss two examples of this new transnationalism. First, Aihwa Ong’s (1999) *Flexible Citizenship*. Ong’s research subjects are networks of elite Chinese in the Asia Pacific Region. Identifying her work in opposition to globalisation theory (which she reads as dominated by structuralists such as Harvey, who privilege economic rationality and neglect people’s everyday actions and practices) and diaspora studies (which she reads as focused on texts, narratives and subjectivities at the expense of structuring political-economic systems), she adopts perspectives which account for both human agency (situated ethnography) and the normative milieus of late capitalism (governmentality and political economy). And

she makes two principal findings. The first she calls flexible citizens: mobile managers, technocrats and professionals who have the material and symbolic resources and the postnational ethos necessary to evade and take advantage of different nation-state regimes as sites for investment, work and family relocation; who use citizenship (the passport) as a strategy to accumulate capital, power and social prestige, primarily, but also security or political refuge. Her second finding relates to the way in which states respond to the challenge of transnationalism. She calls this response variegated or graduated sovereignty: zones become subject to different types of governmentality (different levels of protections, rights, services, care and investment on the one hand, and control, discipline and surveillance on the other) dependent upon the role their populations play in making the country competitive and profitable.

There are many similarities between this text of Ong's and Smith's (2001) *Transnational Urbanism*. Smith also identifies his work in opposition to other literatures. He identifies it in opposition to what he calls the recentering metaphors of late modernist thinking: the world or global city (Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Friedmann 1986, 1995; Sassen 1991); the postmodern city (Jameson 1984, 1991; Soja 1986, 1989, 1996; Dear 1986, 1991a, 1991b; Dear and Flusty 1999); and Harvey's notion of time-space compression – all three of which, by his reading, privilege the role of capital accumulation over the roles of social actors (political economic elites, social theorists, ordinary people). And he identifies his work in opposition to postmodernism (which, by his reading, produces the binary of macropolitics and micropolitics, refocuses away from the former to the latter, conflates this micropolitics with the local scale, and so neglects context).

Before moving on, Sassen's global city thesis deserves some comment. Sassen argues that simultaneous spatial dispersal or decentralisation of economic activity and specifically manufacturing activity (the global assembly line, the international division of labour) and global integration or centralisation of management, control and planning functions gives major cities a new strategic role: as command points in the organisation of the world economy; as locations for finance and specialised or advanced service firms; as sites of joint production of financial innovations and specialised or advanced services; and as markets for these innovations and services. She identifies two principal effects of



this new role: restructuring of urban economic and social order (social polarisation, since producer services employ only high-paid and low-paid staff, and unionised manufacturing moves out or becomes transformed into sweatshops and homework); and changes to urban form (global capital produces business districts, gentrification, urban glamour zones, airports, hotels, restaurants; the new immigrant workforce produces spaces of postcolonialism). In part, Sassen's thesis deserves comment here because others have used it to frame their research on high-waged and high-skilled professional and managerial international labour migration. Beaverstock, for example, suggests that changes in the global financial system through the 1980s (growth of financial and producer services, internationalisation of the financial system, emergence of transnational financial institutions) required that transnational corporations locate offices in global cities, leading to new forms of labour market demand in these cities (Beaverstock 1994, 1996). He finds that chartered accountants and bankers move overseas in response to the corporate strategy of the firm (existing labour supplies must be optimised, global skill shortages must be relieved), and the need to enhance individual career development (Beaverstock 1990). (On this system-and-career approach, where 'system' refers to international labour markets and internal labour markets, see Salt 1986, 1988 also).

Moving on – or rather moving back, returning, to my discussion of the new transnationalism literature – in his research, like Ong, Smith also seeks to combine the micro-networks of social action that people create, move in and act upon in their daily lives (transnational ethnographic practice) with macro-economic and geopolitical transformations (historicised political economy). Findings for Smith differ from Ong's flexible citizenship and variegated sovereignty, but not by that much. He argues that, as a result of two transnational political events, the end of the Cold War and the spread of the neo-liberal variant of globalisation (which displaced millions of political refugees and economic migrants), and as a result of new means of communication and travel (which facilitate back and forth movements of people and ideas, multi-sited projects and exchanges of material resources), we now live in transnational times, the characteristic social form of which is the migrant network. This transnational moment has implications, for cities and nation-states in particular. Cities become places where criss-crossing transnational circuits of communication and cross-cutting local, translocal and

transnational social practices come together in a disorderly and contingent fashion. And, for Smith, nation-states and transnational practices are not mutually exclusive (as Appadurai suggests) but mutually constitutive. Through politically constructed policies, legitimating discourses and institutional practices, nation-states constitute and mediate flows of transnational investment, migration and cultural production through their boundaries. Sending states work to reincorporate out-migrants into their projects (as foreign investors, for example). Receiving states police their borders physically through immigration legislation and discursively through new nationalist ideologies. So it seems that transnationalism is not simply a positive condition, as Appadurai appears to suggest. Smith calls these new efforts by established power structures to regularise behaviour and recommit loyalties transnationalism's "*noire side*" (p156).

A final note on this new transnationalism literature. The texts of Ong and Smith exhibit many similarities, but I do not wish to overplay this, since they also exhibit significant differences. For example, Ong privileges global capital (which induces transnationalism) over the family and the state (which are associated with and respond to transnationalism) in a way that Smith does not (Ong 1999: 4):

The chapters that follow will discuss the transnationality induced by global capital circulating in the Asia Pacific region, the transnationalism associated with the practices and imagination of elite Chinese subjects, and the varied responses of Southeast Asian states to capital and mobility.

Also, Ong attends to differential mobility in a way that Smith does not, distinguishing between mobile masculinity and localised femininity, and identifying some costs of transnationalism: abandoned children (parachuted into boarding schools by astronaut businessmen) and strained marital relations. On Los Angeles, she writes that "whereas the movements of capital have stimulated immigrant strategies of mobility, many poor Americans are unable to respond in quite the same way and are instead 'staying put' or 'being stuck' in place, especially in rundown ethnic ghettos" (p9). By contrast, Smith's reimagined Los Angeles privileges the transnational networks of Korean transmigrants over the more locally bound networks of poor and often black Angelinos.

### 3.4 Mobility

This new transnationalism literature is not our only alternative to the globalisation literature of the early 1990s. Another set of writings which is currently popular, and which is less interested in the scale of movement (global or transnational) than movement itself, in all its forms (corporeal, imaginative, virtual, voluntary, coerced), has come to be known as mobility studies. As with the transnationalism literature, it is important to note that mobility studies did not simply appear in the late 1990s as a response to the globalisation debate. One (radical) starting point was Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) *Nomadology*, which inspired such influential texts as Braidotti's (1994) *Nomadic Subjects*, the argument of which reads as follows. At the present moment in history, transformations of the system of production (from manufacturing to services and information) are altering traditional social and symbolic structures, resulting in the decline of sociosymbolic systems based on the state, the family and masculine authority. At the same time, with poststructuralism, we see the decline of fixed identities, the dissolution of notions of a centre, purity, originary sites, the exposure of performative illusions of unity and mastery. Some see this as a crisis. Braidotti sees it as an opportunity, to find a way out of the phallogentric vision of the subject, to develop an alternative vision of subjectivity in general and female feminist subjectivity in particular. What she finds or develops is the nomad, a promiscuous, playful polyglot who has relinquished all idea of fixity, who is in transition and inhabits places of transit (the airport lounge, for example); a theoretical figuration or political fiction, since the 'real' world contains neoconservative states and monolingual people who desire stability.

Another (less radical) starting point was Clifford's (1992) paper 'Travelling Cultures'. Clifford criticises the localising strategy of traditional anthropology, which centres culture around a particular locus or field (the village, for example), studies localised dwelling and rooted native experience, and marginalises travel, transport technologies, prior and ongoing contact and commerce with other places, national context, and the wider global world of intercultural import-export. He calls on researchers to rethink cultures as sites of both dwelling and travelling; to concern themselves with travelling subjects (merchants, tourists, migrants), places (hotels, motels, airports), experiences

(fleeting encounters, inauthenticity, superficiality, but also exploration, escape, transformation) and products (knowledges, stories, traditions).

But in the last few years, mobility has become particularly popular as a metaphor, especially since publication of John Urry's (2000) *Sociology Beyond Societies*. Urry observes that, in contemporary times, inhuman objects (machines, technologies, texts, images) are reconstituting social relations through the production of mobilities across borders. These mobilities (risks, consumer goods and services, cultures, migrants and visitors, symbols and icons) have social consequences: for dwelling (from propinquity, localness and communion to new kinds of dwelling: bunds, neo-nationalism, diaspora); for citizenship (from spatial and state-ist citizenship, from citizenship of stasis, to global scale hazards, rights and duties, to post-national, de-territorialised, global citizens, to multi-tiered, disjunctive, contested citizenship); and for states (from gardeners, regulators of people, to gatekeepers, facilitators of mobilities). Urry's response to these observations is twofold. First, in his own work, he replaces the undermined metaphor of region (or society, or sovereign nation-state) with new metaphors: of networks (sets of interconnecting nodes); of fluids (peoples, information, money and waste all flow, and are thus subject to mixture and gradient, and to mapping by rate of flow, viscosity, depth, consistency and degree of confinement); and of scapes (the routeways of machines, technologies, organisations and actors along which flows are relayed). Second, he calls on Sociology to do the same, to refocus away from nation-state-society towards mobilities: the travels of people, ideas, images, objects, messages, waste products and money across international borders, and their implications for experiences of time, space, dwelling and citizenship.

Despite its popularity, and like the globalisation and transnationalism literatures discussed above, writings on mobility have not been received without criticism and debate. Cresswell (2001) warns against associating mobility with playfulness and resistance, and immobility with seriousness and domination, and celebrating mobility simply as a force for good. Drawing on Lefebvre, he writes of "the production of mobilities" (p11), that mobilities are always produced out of material conditions, that "(social) mobility is a (social) product" (p13). He notes that access to travel is

differential, motion is gendered, and the mobilities of some depend on the significantly different mobilities or immobilities of others (sex tourism, for example, demands that women move to or stop at particular places). Crang (2002) argues that studies of mobility are too often celebrations of elite spaces. He notes that Augé's (1999) non-places (freeways and airways, department stores and supermarkets, telephones and television) are real places of employment and exploitation for many people. And he notes that spaces of travel (from VIP departure lounges frequented by middle-aged, healthy, male business travellers, to local buses in US cities frequented by poor, black women) are more often hierarchical than open and mixed.

In his most recent work, Urry has paid more attention to the social production of mobilities. He acknowledges that not all mobile people are tourists (voluntary mobility). Some are global exiles, fleeing famine, war, torture, persecution and genocide (coerced mobility). In response to criticisms from feminist analysts, he acknowledges that not all people are mobile even. The mobilities of some presuppose the immobilities of others. For example, "the mobile tourist gaze presupposes immobile bodies (normally female) servicing and displaying their bodies for those who are mobile and passing by" (Urry 2002a: 160). And he characterises mobility as double-edged. On the one hand, it minimises privatisation, expands social capital and promotes economic development. On the other, access to travel is uneven, leading to mobility-exclusion, and increasing travel is unsustainable, meaning hard choices must be made about who gets to travel and thus to meet distant people and places (Urry 2002b).

There is, of course, another literature out there which does not just pay attention to or acknowledge the social production of mobilities, but rather focuses almost exclusively on the limits to mobility. Harvey (1982) suggests that, in contrast to the hyper-mobility of money, the mobility of production is limited by fixed capital, and the mobility of labour is limited through migration policy, pension agreements etc. because each place needs a reserve army of labour fixed to it, and because each place invests in its own labour through education, training, healthcare and so on. Dowty (1987: 181) researched migration policy through the 1980s and published under the title *Closed Borders: The Contemporary Assault on Freedom of Movement*. Torpey (2000) focuses on technologies

for regulating movement. He notes that the passport appeared at the same time as people became free and masterless (the French revolution, the birth of capitalism, the birth of the state), and that its significance increased during and after the two great wars of the twentieth century (war brought new transport technologies but also new security threats; the welfare state brought new requirements, for identifiable eligible and ineligible subjects). He insists that the twenty-first century state remains in control of passage, and points to contemporary developments in technologies that read the body: electronically scanned palm-prints, retina scans and so on.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In line with the conclusion to Chapter 2, I conclude the present chapter with another five maxims; another baseline which sets out (what by my reading are) the most important points to take from these literatures and debates. My first maxim is that whatever we want to call it (globalisation, transnationalism, mobility), the present moment is characterised by social relations which are stretched across space, leading to movements of people, ideas and things, sometimes around the globe, sometimes within or between nation-states. The second maxim is that transportation and communication technologies and mass migration must be central characters in any tale of how we got to this present moment, as must the individual actions of and the cumulative actions between countless agencies and institutions (capitalists and capitalism, officers of government and nation-states, migrants and migrant networks etc.). The third is that cultural life at the present moment is complex, dialectical, double-edged. On the one hand, we see evidence of (positive?) new internationalism, one-worldism, globality. We see new figures (the cosmopolitan, the flexible citizen, the nomad, the global citizen) and social forms (the diaspora, the migrant network, the *bund*). But on the other hand, we see evidence of (negative?) renewed localisms and nationalisms. We see other renewed figures: the local, the tribe member, the fundamentalist. In addition, we see evidence of Westernisation and Americanisation, but also reverse colonisation (Latinisation, for example) and renewed local specificity (since local culture, history and institutions mediate the effects of globalisation, transnationalism and mobility). The fourth maxim is that the nation-state at the present moment is not so much in crisis as in change. We see evidence of (positive?)

new disjuncture and deterritorialisation, but also (negative?) renewed conjuncture and reterritorialisation. We see new types of governmentality: graduated sovereignty, gatekeeping, reincorporation of out-migrants by sending states, policing of borders by receiving states. And my fifth and final maxim is that globalisation, transnationalism and mobility have their dark side. We see evidence of industrialisation but also deindustrialisation. We see uneven development and social exclusion. And we see people placed differently in relation to transportation and communications technologies. We see the mobility of some people dependent upon the significantly different mobility or even immobility of other people.

These principals, together with those laid out in Chapter 2, provide the research context for this project. I now turn to Chapter 4, in which I address questions of research methodology.

## CHAPTER 4: PHILOSOPHY, METHOD, MADNESS

It is not necessary to know everything in order to understand something.  
(Geertz 1973: 20)

### 4.1 Introduction

A part of my position on philosophy and methodology in human geography has already leaked into previous chapters. I confess my longing for qualitative research methods and theoretically informed research in Chapter 1. Also in Chapter 1, I distinguish between the language of audit and the language of thick description. In Chapter 2, I make three telling conclusions. First, there can be no one motivation for tourism – diverse tourist sensibilities and practices arise out of particular social, historical and geographical settings. Second, there are some conditions most tourists are subject to, so we can identify patterns. And third, we should be careful with typologies and claims of changes and restructuring – tourists are not standard or passive consumers, they are unique and creative human beings. In Chapter 3, I write favourably of what I call the new transnationalism literature. I describe how Ong (1999) rejects the globalisation literature which privileges economic rationality and logic over people's everyday actions and practices, and diaspora studies which privileges texts, narratives and subjectivities over structuring political-economic systems. She seeks to combine human agency which produces and negotiates cultural meanings (situated ethnography) with social conditions, the power-context within which agency operates (political economy). And I describe how Smith (2001) rejects totality theories which ignore or marginalise as exceptions elements of life they can not explain, and postmodernism which produces the binary macro-politics and micro-politics, and refocuses away from the former toward the latter, thus neglecting context. He also seeks to combine political economy (macro-economic and geopolitical context) with ethnography (micro-level social action – the everyday practices and strategies by which people make sense of and act upon context).

In this chapter I clarify my position. I begin with some comments on philosophy in social science and specifically human geography. This first section draws heavily on two



texts. One is Delanty's (1997) *Social Science: Beyond Constructivism and Realism*, in which he outlines three classical models of social science: explanation and description (the positivist tradition); understanding and interpretation (the hermeneutical tradition); and critique and emancipation (the critical tradition). The other is Johnston's (1997) *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American Human Geography since 1945*. Again, three different sets of beliefs regarding epistemology are identified (after Habermas 1972): the empirical or analytical sciences (positivism); the hermeneutic sciences (humanism); and the critical sciences (Marxism and transcendental realism). The section is rather long and descriptive, I admit, and it rehearses some rather old and tired debates, and it contains rather too many lists. I have chopped it down as much as possible (the lists are a product of this editing process). But I have retained much of it because I wish to communicate my intellectual background – in the same way that photo albums communicate personal backgrounds. So feel free to flick through Section 4.2 at a pace. Not every image is important. But the overall picture – of my training, my reading – provides essential context for what comes later, including Section 4.3 of this chapter, which addresses two questions. What modes of research practice does my philosophical position encourage? And how well did these approaches travel into the field?

## **4.2 Philosophy**

### *4.2.1 The positivist tradition*

Delanty (1997) identifies five tenets of positivism: scientific method, or the application of the experimental methods of the natural sciences to the social sciences; naturalism and phenomenalism (science is the study of reality, which is external to science itself, so which can be neutrally observed); empiricism (science involves movement from observation to verification of objectively existing general and causal laws); value freedom, or the dualism of facts and values; and instrumental knowledge, or the pursuit of technically useful knowledge. Regarding human geography, Johnston (1997) links positivism to spatial science. He cites Schaefer (1953), whose geography involves explaining locational patterns and formulating laws governing the spatial distribution of features across the earth's surface. And he points to numerous attempts to isolate some

primary concepts of geography, from Stouffer's (1940) notion of intervening opportunities to Harvey's (1970) geographical concepts: location, nearness, distance, pattern, morphology.

#### *4.2.2 The hermeneutical tradition*

At its birth, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the positivist tradition was progressive, anti-authoritarian and anti-elitist (Delanty 1997). It attacked clerical authority by separating out divine and natural laws. It emancipated knowledge from the corporate professions (jurisprudence, theology and medicine). And it played a central role in the rise of modern social policy. More recently, this explanatory and descriptive science has hit something of a crisis. Delanty (1997) identifies two theories of importance here. The first is Popper's critical rationalism, which replaces the principle of verification with the principle of falsification. No matter how often a theory is tested, there is always the possibility of falsification. So science proves nothing by experiments. It is fallible. And scientific knowledge is uncertain (though it is the most certain knowledge we can aspire to). The second is Kuhn's theory of paradigms, normal science and revolutionary science, which questions the nature of both truth and progress in science. In the course of normal science, scientists ignore anomalies and attempt to solve problems the solutions to which are contained within the paradigm they operate. Scientists are reluctant to break from a paradigm which offers them security. So truth is more about consensus than correspondence. It is constructed by the scientific community. And progress is not cumulative, since entire paradigms may be falsified.

For Johnston (1997), of importance to this crisis is the powerful critique of positivist geography which came from humanist geography in the 1970s. Humanist geographers criticise positivist geography for its belief in a separate, empirical, objective world (outside of the individual observing it), and its narrow, mechanistic and deterministic view of human beings. Positivist geography dehumanises people. It drains them of what makes them human (meanings, values etc.). Humanist geography is part of what Delanty (1997) calls the hermeneutical tradition, of which he identifies six characteristics: a focus on interpretation (as opposed to observation, description and explanation); anti-scientism

(the social and human sciences should be kept separate from the natural sciences); value-freedom; humanism (a unified human nature makes interpretation possible); linguistic constructivism (reality is linguistically and meaningfully constituted); and intersubjectivity (there is an intersubjective relationship between science and its object). He distinguishes between objectivist and subjectivist hermeneutics. The objectivist strand focuses on consciousness and assumes that human meaning can be studied scientifically and objectively. It covers the neo-Kantians: perception of reality is not passive but is structured by the *a priori* forms of our mind, so that knowledge is of phenomenon only, of objective reality as it appears to us, as it can be known, not as it exists in itself. And it covers Weber's interpretative sociology: the social sciences should combine the explanation of the natural sciences with the understanding of the human sciences, and explain social action by studying conscious intentionality (motives, goals etc.). The subjectivist or context-bound strand focuses on the role of language in constructing social reality and mediating knowledge. Those it covers (Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Gadamer, Winch) hold that we can never understand perfectly or interpret completely. We can only ever translate or enter into dialogue. So science cannot transcend its cultural context.

Humanist geography emerged out of those sub-disciplines more closely linked to the humanities than the social sciences: historical and cultural geography (Johnston 1997). It studies those aspects of people which are most distinctively human (meaning, values, purposes etc.). It focuses on subjectivity, individual decision-makers and their perceived worlds, senses (of place), feelings, ideas, human awareness, knowledge, thoughts, intentions, attitudes, impressions, and their mediation through culture and society (socialisation), and their reflection in texts, especially landscapes. Research involves understanding agents in terms of their goals. Unique and shared theoretical understandings of situations must be isolated. Thoughts and beliefs must be reconstructed. Such research involves description but also empathetic understanding or disciplined naivete (Mercer and Powell 1972). The goal of humanist geography is not so much explanation and prediction as understanding and appreciation, of specific situations, of what people believe, of how beliefs develop, and of how beliefs influence action. Such understanding cannot be used to predict the future. But it may be used as a

guide to the future, to advance the process of self-fulfilment or human becoming, to encourage individuals to discover more about themselves, others and the world, and to help people get along in the world (Johnston 1997).

#### *4.2.3 The critical tradition*

The humanist critique was not the only powerful critique of positivist geography in the 1970s. Another powerful critique came from Marxist and realist geography (Johnston 1997). Blowers (1972) and Peet (1975) argue that, by simply describing the superstructure (geographers as technicians), positivist geography diverts attention from deep causes, and helps maintain the present situation of exploitation. And Harvey (1973) challenges the claim of value-freedom and neutrality, arguing that science is never of value to everyone, and always of value to one or other special interest group. In addition to the positivist tradition, the critical tradition defines itself against the hermeneutical tradition. Delanty (1997) notes that, by viewing social science as context-bound, and searching for understanding only, (subjectivist) hermeneutics leaves reality untouched. He also comments that power shapes meaning, and social conditions give rise to particular systems of meaning, yet hermeneutics has little to say about this. Johnston (1997) lists the questions asked of humanist geography by Marxist and realist geographers. What about environmental constraints and influences on social action (Chappell 1975, Gregory 1978)? What about material things and objective facts (Hay 1979)? And what about societal context and economic conditions (Smith 1979, Sayer 1982)?

Delanty (1997) identifies four characteristics of Marxist social science: critique (knowledge is inherently critical of the prevailing order; it reveals the system of domination); emancipation (alienated society must be set free by deepening society's consciousness of itself); dialectics (science constitutes its object and is at the same time constituted by its object); and historicism and determinism (economic forces are the most important forces in history; historical laws derive from them). Johnston (1997) identifies three positions within critical geography: transcendental realism, Marxism and critical theory. The first, transcendental realism, imagines three domains (Bhaskar 1978): the

empirical (concerned with experiences, with the world as it is perceived); the actual (concerned with events, which may be interpreted in different ways by different individuals); and the real (concerned with structures, which cannot be apprehended directly, and which contain the mechanisms that lead to events and their perception). Like positivism, the goal of transcendental realism is to discover causes and explain events. But unlike positivism, the goal is to theorise mechanisms, not realisations. Achievement of this rests on intensive research programmes (Sayer and Morgan 1985), which examine causal processes in a particular case or group of cases, and seek not to generalise beyond that particular context (as positivist extensive research programmes might). Emphasis is placed on constraining economic processes, but human agency is not denied. Economic processes provide options which are limiting. Knowing actors get to choose among these options, and their choices feed into future options (Sayer 1982).

Of structuralism's three separate levels of analysis, Marxism focuses on the superstructure (the level of appearances, which can be directly apprehended and studied empirically) and the infrastructure (the level of processes, which create and maintain the superstructure, which cannot be observed, so which can only be theorised from clues and tested against patterns in the superstructure) (Johnston 1997). (Structuralism's third level of analysis is the deep structure: the level of imperatives, reflected in the processes of the infrastructure). For Marxists, the infrastructure comprises a set of economic processes: the materialist base. The superstructure reflects this base, but refracts it through local history, through spatial and temporal context. As with transcendental realism, then, most Marxist geographers reject determinism. Context (the nation-state, for example) is created, maintained and changed by human actors, who interpret economic processes in various ways. What distinguishes Marxism from transcendental realism is that Marxism is a form of realism interested almost exclusively in economic processes and committed to bringing down capitalism with all its contradictions and built-in inequalities through politics or revolution. Marxism positions class conflict at the centre of these economic processes. This is a model of society initially derived from Hegel. Reality is contradictory. Change occurs through overcoming or resolving contradictions. For Marxist geographers, spatial organisation is the result not of consensus (co-operation, cohesion, integration) but of conflict (sectional interests, competition) (Eyles 1974).

As for critical theory, this position within critical geography has its roots in the Frankfurt School. Members of this School – Adorno, Horkheimer, Habermas, Marcuse, Weber – are interested less in Marx's critique of political economy than in developing a critique of ideology, understood as the false consciousness produced by capitalism's culture industry in order to prevent contradictions from reaching crisis point and to expand capitalism while negating its opposition (Delanty 1997). Critical theory assumes that revolution will only come when the proletariat are emancipated, when they are made aware of their exploitation and given the knowledge to counter it. This goal of emancipation is sought through a combination of Marxist-realism and the development of communicative skills (i.e. educational programmes) (Johnston 1997).

#### *4.2.4 Between and beyond two extremes*

This is an appropriate point at which to clarify the story of this chapter so far. Delanty (1997) and Johnston (1997) outline three world views within social science and human geography respectively: the positivist tradition (or explanation and description, or the empirical and analytical sciences); the hermeneutical tradition (or understanding and interpretation, or humanism); and the critical tradition (or critique and emancipation, or Marxism, transcendental realism and critical theory). Neither commentator arranges these world views in a model of succession, with a hermeneutical paradigm replacing a positivist paradigm, and a critical paradigm replacing a hermeneutical paradigm. Rather, they point to debate between co-existing philosophies of social science and human geography. Johnston (1997) points to positivist and humanist critiques of critical geography, for example. From a positivist perspective, the claims of critical geography are immune from testing, verification or falsification (Duncan and Ley 1982, Saunders and Williams 1986). And critical geography operates outside of the system, calling for revolution, but much more might be attained through pragmatic work within the system (Berry 1974, Harries 1975). From a humanist perspective, critical geography neglects lived experience and the micro-world of family and neighbourhood (Eyles 1981). And it presents economic processes as the ultimate cause of all behaviour and excludes other influences such as active agents or free decision-makers (Duncan and Ley 1982).

Neither Delanty (1997) nor Johnston (1997) arrange the three world views in a model of succession. Both commentators point to debate between co-existing philosophies. But Johnston (1997) does suggest that, by the early 1980s, spatial science (positivism) had lost ground in this debate to social theory (humanism and Marxist-realism), and that the important debate, at least for human geography in the 1980s and early 1990s, was between the two extremes of social theory: humanism (emphasising agency) and Marxist-realism (emphasising structure). Delanty (1997) suggests something similar. He judges that positivism's many failings have been realised and accepted by social scientists. The theoretical debate of importance for Delanty, then, is that between critical realism and constructivism. Critical realism has its roots in Marxism and transcendental realism. It emphasises the externality of reality and the objectivity of science as a form of knowledge. It aims to get at the truth of things, defends the possibility of causal explanation, and involves a critical dimension. Constructivism has its roots in the idealism of Hume, Kant and Weber (knowledge is shaped by experience and context). It holds that science is not independent of its object but rather constructs it, the empirical world of reality can only be known by our cognitive structures, and reality is mediated through the structures of science (with its limited methodology).

In the present section, I discuss (very briefly) five attempts to move between and beyond these extremes of humanism, Marxist-realism, constructivism and critical realism: critical hermeneutical communication theory; structuration theory and the new regional geography; the habitus; governmentality; and Actor Network Theory.

The reconstruction attempt to which Delanty (1997) gives most attention is that by Apel (1980, 1984) and Habermas (1978, 1988) to resolve the three social sciences – the natural or empirical-analytical sciences, the human or historical-hermeneutic sciences, and the social or critically oriented sciences – into one unified theory: critical hermeneutical communication theory. According to Apel and Habermas, each of these three social sciences reflects an interest: positivist science reflects a technical interest linked to the world of work; hermeneutical science reflects a practical interest linked to the world of communicative interaction and language; and critical science reflects an emancipatory

interest linked to the world of power. Since each interest is valid, none of the three social sciences are sufficient on their own, and the best of each must be rescued. Critical hermeneutical communication theory opposes value-freedom, accepts that science has a dialectical relationship with its object, and accepts that consciousness is constituted in language. Its starting point, then, is not consciousness (Marxism) or instrumental domination (critical theory of the Frankfurt School), but communication. It critiques distorted communication, not ideology. And its goal is critical public discourse; democracy as a discursive process.

The reconstruction attempt to which Johnston (1997) gives most attention is that by Giddens (1981, 1984) to reconceptualise the dualism of objectivism and structuralism on the one side (the object – society, the social whole – dominates the subject – the individual, society's individual parts) and subjectivism and hermeneutics on the other (the subject dominates the object): structuration theory. Giddens does this by rethinking the dualism as a duality. In and through their practices, agents reproduce the conditions which make these practices possible. In other words, the day-to-day activity of social actors draws upon and reproduces the structural features of wider social systems. An important concept in structuration theory is the locale. Space, from the room of a house to the territory of a nation-state, is an active context or setting for social interaction. This concept, the locale, links Giddens' structuration theory to what Gilbert (1988) and Pudup (1988) call the new regional geography<sup>21</sup>. One origin of this new regional geography is a paper by Thrift (1983) which confronts two related problems. The first problem is that of translation. Thrift asks, how do we relate abstract generalisations (a generalisable frame of reference) to the features of a particular place at a particular time (the unique aspects of situations)? The second problem is that of extreme determinism among some structural Marxists on the one hand (humans as plastic, mechanical, devoid of creativity, incapable, unknowing) and extreme voluntarism or individualism among some humanists on the other (humans as autonomous and unsocialised). The solution proposed by Thrift is a contextual theory of human action. Structure and agency are fought through in

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<sup>21</sup> The label 'new regional geography' implies an old regional geography. In the early twentieth century, a regional geography inflected by environmental determinism advocated the mapping of climatic regions by various topical geographies: soil, vegetation, agriculture, industrial resources, settlement etc. (Johnston 1997).



conflict in particular situations. He advocates attention to Giddens' structuration theory, and to those theories which incorporate mediating concepts or third levels between human agency and social structures (Bourdieu's concept of the habitus, for example – see below). Thrift also advocates the locale as a unit of study. This agenda was taken up by Massey (1984) in her influential localities research, which found that social structures vary from locality to locality due to previous layers of investment, and so general processes have particular outcomes in unique, constitutive places.

To these attempts to move between and beyond the two extremes of social theory emphasised by Delanty (1997) and Johnston (1997), I will add three more: the habitus; governmentality; and Actor Network Theory. Bourdieu (1984) seeks to deal with this problem of extremes by inserting an intermediate level between necessity or conditions of existence (structure) and practices or choices or taste (agency): the habitus. He describes the habitus as a disposition, which functions below the level of consciousness and language, which orients practices practically, and which embeds what we mistakenly call values in the most automatic gestures and the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body. I return to Bourdieu in Chapter 5, where I suggest that the habitus as mediating concept or third level does too little work for my own personal taste. As “social necessity made second nature” (Bourdieu 1984: 474), it is too closely related to the material conditions of existence (position in the relations of production, volume and composition of capital), which govern less determinant subsidiary characteristics or secondary variables in Bourdieu's work: sex, distribution in geographical space, age, ethnic origin, and marital status.

We may read Foucault's writings on governmentality as another means of moving between and beyond the two extremes of social theory (see Barnett 1999, 2001). In 1978, Foucault gave a lecture at the Collège de France entitled ‘Governmentality’ (Foucault 1991). During that lecture, he gave the term ‘governmentality’ a narrow definition: that form of government which emerged in the sixteenth century, which has a specific target (population), form of knowledge (political economy), and technical means (apparatuses of security). In 1982, Foucault gave a seminar at the University of Vermont entitled ‘Technologies of the Self’ (Foucault 1997). During that seminar, he identified four types

of technologies or techniques human beings use to understand themselves: technologies of production; technologies of sign systems; technologies of power; and technologies of the self. And he gave the term 'governmentality' a wider definition: the encounter between technologies of power or technologies of the domination of others, "which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination", and technologies of the self, "which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness" (p225). This second definition seems to locate governmentality within Foucault's wider project, described as "a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects [...]. A genealogy of the modern subject" (Foucault 1982: 208), and broken down into three domains: truth (we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge); power (we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others); and ethics (we constitute ourselves as moral agents). Governmentality, it would seem, refers to the encounter between axes two and three of this wider project, to all techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour, to the intermediate ground between the domination we find in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1975) and the freedom we find in *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1979 and 1984).

My final escape attempt is Actor Network Theory. One origin of Actor Network Theory is the sociology of scientific knowledge literature. Latour and Woolgar (1979), for example, conclude from their research into the construction of scientific facts, that scientific facts emerge out of contexts or networks: decisions made in the laboratory; investment in materials, equipment and instruments; investment in intellect; macrosocial factors; support of funding agencies; existing knowledges and techniques in other fields; negotiations between team members. They attend to ideology and macroinstitutional factors, but also, more than this, they attend to local context or micro-processes: practices of interpretation, daily activities, routine exchanges, informal discussions, unguarded intonation and gestures, accidental events, chance encounters. In other words, they seek to do justice to the complicated material and collective situation. Michael (2000) draws on the sociology of scientific knowledge literature and makes a number of points regarding action in the world, of which I select three. First, analytically, networks (or

co(a)gents) which connect culture (including discourse), technology and nature (including bodies, environments and animals) are more important than humans. Second, technologies shape and (re)produce (our conceptions of) the social, the cultural and the human. They mediate and reflect everyday life routines. They contribute to processes of ordering and disordering. And, in turn, consumers actively adapt, reinterpret and domesticate technologies: mutual determination (as opposed to technological determination). Third, this field of hybrids, quasi-objects and cyborgs is rich with debate. While Bruno Latour and Michel Serres emphasise microsociology, for example, Donna Haraway emphasises the big actors: the state, class, race, patriarchy<sup>22</sup>. The importance of Actor Network Theory for this chapter is that it encourages us to rethink the concept of agency. Urry writes (2000: 14; emphasis in original):

Human powers increasingly derive from the complex *interconnections* of humans with material objects, including signs, machines, technologies, texts, physical environments, animals, plants and waste products. People possess few powers which are uniquely human.

It is not that humans don't exert agency. It is that humans exert agency with objects, as complex mobile hybrids: "The human and physical worlds are elaborately intertwined and cannot be analysed separate from each other, as society and as nature, or humans and objects" (Urry 2000: 14). Amin and Thrift (2002) hold that subjects are knowledgeable, but that they know through tools. They identify three sources of agency-intensity in the city: the human body (automatic, passionate, instinctive, emotional); objects (tools, artifice, environment); and the biological realm (animals, flora, bacteria, viruses). They write "Humans are defined by their use of tools: they are technical from their very origins as a species. Tools and machines are best thought of as extra organs growing into existence, rather than something outside the compass of the body. Technics is originary". And they write "Machines are not seen as something 'other'; they are a fundamental fact of *life*" (p78, emphasis in original).

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<sup>22</sup>While Haraway's work draws on science studies, focuses upon heterogeneity and distributedness, and shares certain features with Actor Network Theory, it also draws upon feminism and cultural studies, and comprises a critique of Actor Network Theory (Michael 2000).

#### 4.2.5 Postmodernism

Delanty's (1997) own way between and beyond the realist-constructivist divide is to expose it as a false dichotomy (after Beck 1996). He points to examples of radical or critical constructivism. In the work of Bourdieu, society is an objective reality with structural order, social actors have order concepts which constitute social reality and produce meaning, and these constructions of social actors vary depending on their positions in the objective structures of society. In feminist theory, social reality is characterised as a gender construction in need of reconstruction, and science is characterised as the product of a masculine value system (Harding 1983, 1986, 1987)<sup>23</sup>. And he points to similarities between reflexive realism and critical constructivism (as opposed to naive realism and naive constructivism). Few constructivists deny the existence of underlying structures. Few realists deny the dimension of constructivism in knowledge. Both reflexive realists and critical constructivists reject the correspondence theory of truth. And both support an emancipatory critique.

In his framework, Delanty (1997: 97) sets critical constructivism against what he calls "extreme constructivism": post-structuralism and postmodernism. Post-structuralism emerged among French intellectuals out of the crisis of 1968. Key figures are Lacan, Derrida and Barthes. Post-structuralism draws on structuralism's anti-humanism to criticise other methodologies for their philosophy of the subject. Lacan holds that consciousness is constructed in language, and identity is constructed from the constantly shifting interplay of metaphors and signs. Derrida holds that truth, reality and science are constructed in language. With Barthes, he suggests that society and culture can be read like a text, of which there are no correct readings, only equally valid interpretations of interpretations, since signs get their meanings from other signs and not by reference to reality. Postmodernism emerged from British and American cultural studies and literary

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<sup>23</sup> Neither Delanty (1997) nor Johnston (1997) seem to know quite what to do with feminism. This may be because it cuts across all three models of social science. McDowell (1993) identifies three feminist perspectives: rational or empiricist feminism, which focuses on capitalism and patriarchy as systems of oppression, either working independently of each other or together as one; anti-rational feminism or feminist standpoint theory, which celebrates gender differences but demands an end to the privileges historically enjoyed by men; and post-rational or postmodern feminism, which emphasises that women are different from each other and cannot be treated as one category.

criticism and from the crisis of 1989. For Delanty (1997), it is a radically open writing and artistic style. It is a method: deconstruction. It is a society characterised by fragmentation and multiplicity. And it is a politics which rejects the idea of historical progress, and embraces heterogeneity, ambiguity, transgression, contingency, difference.

In geography, postmodernism has been highly influential (Johnston 1997). Soja (1989) almost conflates geography and postmodernism. He argues that social science has been dominated by a history concerned with how social processes differ over time, unfold sequentially, across all spaces simultaneously. Now geography has caught up: social processes differ over space too, and different things happen in different spaces simultaneously. Dear (1994) identifies three principle constructs of postmodernism. First, postmodernism as style: the promotion of difference in literature, literary criticism, design, film, art, photography and architecture. Second, postmodernism as epoch. We live in new times, characterised by disjuncture, complexity and chaos. Third, postmodernism as method. Postmodernists emphasise pluralism, multiple voices, alternative subjectivities, the Other. They embrace constructivism, and work to interrogate taken-for-granted categories, to denaturalise binaries. They take seriously the difficulties of communication and representation. Our writing is intertextual (Gregory and Walford 1989, Barnes and Duncan 1992). We describe things using words we only know from other texts. The signifier points to another signifier, and another, and never the signified. Reading is not straightforward either. Different readers interpret the same text in different ways, according to their own particular inter-textual field of reference, the discursive practices of their own particular textual communities (Barnes and Duncan 1992), and their own particular past biographies and present intentions (Ley and Duncan 1993).

#### *4.2.6 Conclusion*

My method of argument has been critical and exemplificatory rather than experimental, persuasive rather than conclusive. That is in the nature of the changes which we experience. They are not housed in a laboratory, nor can they be run as a set of equations.

(Albrow 1996: 185)

On a scale of late modern thought in which Michel Foucault is at point zero and Alasdair MacIntyre at point ten, I settle around point six. Finding a way between these two wild extremes, a ruthless scientific relativism and living as a quest for meaning in living, is the fate of anyone who seeks to grasp the contemporary world.

(Albrow 1996: 5)

Where do I settle on the scales of late modern thought outlined in this section? First, I find the various critiques of positivism compelling. I reject as naive the following positivist principles: scientific method (the application of the experimental methods of the natural sciences to the social sciences); naturalism (science as the study of an objective reality external to science itself); value-freedom; prediction; and correspondence theories of truth. Humans do not seek efficiency in some uniform manner. They are distinct individuals, creative in both reasoned and emotional ways. And knowledge is not of reality as it exists in itself. It is of reality as it appears to us, which is shaped by experience and context.

According to Johnston's (1997) schema, my rejection of positivism locates me in the region of social theory (humanism and Marxist-realism). The present paragraph should locate me somewhere around that point in social theory where Delanty's (1997) reflexive realism and critical constructivism meet, far from the extremes of humanism as voluntarism and individualism, and Marxist-realism as historicism and determinism. I have learnt from the hermeneutic tradition the importance of agency or knowing individuals, and to aim for understanding of beliefs and specific situations. I do not accept that understanding, as opposed to explanation, leaves reality untouched. Understanding may not be used to predict the future, but it may act as a guide to the future nevertheless. And it may help people 'go on' in the world, and advance the process of human becoming. From Marxist-realism, I have learnt the value of critique. There is a place for technically useful knowledge (depending on for whom such technical knowledge is useful) – revolution is not the only answer. But the present situation, of capitalism, with all its contradictions and built-in inequalities (see Harvey 1982), is unsatisfactory to say the very least. I have also learnt from the critical tradition the importance of environmental, societal and economic context and constraints. I find structuralism helpful, with some reservations. There is clearly a superstructure, a level of appearances. And there seems to be some kind of infrastructure too, a level of processes.

But I am not convinced that economic processes dominate this infrastructure. I therefore reject historicism and determinism. Economic forces are not always the most important forces in history. Humans are never so plastic, mechanical, incapable.

I am happy that none of these statements are contradictory, though I am aware of the risks. Loosely similar frameworks, which emphasise inequality, materiality and contradictions within the accumulation process, but which accept non-Marxist concepts, that economic concerns are not the only or even the primary concerns, that revolution is not the only political practice, and that Marxism cannot illuminate everything, seemed to work well for post-Marxists and political-economists through the 1980s (Corbridge 1989, Peet and Thrift 1989). My own (twenty-first century) way between the wild extremes of social theory is informed by these post-Marxisms and political economies, and also structuration theory and Actor Network Theory. Neither the object nor the subject dominates in my framework. In and through their practices, in particular spatial contexts or settings, agents reproduce the conditions which make these practices possible. Yet this action is not purely human. It emerges out of networks connecting culture, technology and nature. It derives from humans *and* material objects.

Finally, what of postmodernism? Barnes and Duncan (1992) express dismay that some geographers seek to incorporate a postmodernism stripped of its central and most radical claims into a reconstructed modernist geography. Sorry, but I am one of those geographers (for whom no *sincere* apologies are necessary). I find the central and most radical claims of postmodernism intensely stimulating. Communication and representation are clearly problematic. But I fear for the 'anything goes' attitude of much postmodernism as method. Ultimately, relativism just affirms the existing order (McDowell 1991, Graham 1995). And much postmodernism overemphasises the democratic nature of popular culture and consumerism at the expense of power and domination (Delanty 1997). Rather than postmodernism as method, I choose variations of humanism (we 'go on' in the world, for the most part, because a unified human nature makes some empathetic understanding possible, though such understanding rests on translation and dialogue more than perfect and complete interpretation) and realism (much of reality may be constructed in language, but none of it may be reduced to

language). Note that these choices do not exclude postmodernism as style or epoch. I live surrounded by difference, and wish to silence none of it<sup>24</sup>. To conclude, then, on a scale of late modern thought, I settle around Albrow (1996) himself. I reject the radical claims of positivism, and I shy away from those of postmodernism, towards something between the two, what Albrow calls ‘pragmatic universalism’, an approach which is sceptical about ever discovering timeless truth, but which recognises the necessity to affirm truths on the best understanding available to us in our own time.

### 4.3 Method and madness

#### *4.3.1 What modes of research practice does my philosophical position encourage?*

For Ong (1999) and Smith (2001), central figures in the new transnationalism literature, the philosophical position set out above (Section 4.2.6), that the world is made up of creative but contextually situated individuals, encourages two approaches or modes of research practice: ethnography (creative individuals) and political economy (contextually situated individuals). Let me preface my discussion of ethnography and political economy with the following set of acknowledgements. I am aware that ethnography describes an intensive, contextual, holistic approach to the field, or a method of careful and long-term observation *in situ*, or a collection of qualitative research methods including participant observation. And I am aware that political economy describes the classical economics of Smith and Ricardo (which emphasise ‘political’ distribution and ‘economic’ production), or Marx’s method of dialectical materialism (which conceives of production and distribution as products of historical material circumstances), or the various Marxisms of the 1960s (fundamental Marxism, analytical Marxism, post-Marxism), or the radical geography of the 1970s, or the many contemporary geographies which foreground the political, the economic, and the irrevocable link between the two. In other words, ethnography and political economy are large and complex categories. Moreover, in many ways ethnography and political economy are of a different order. On a line from epistemology to ontology, ethnography sits closer to epistemology (crudely,

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<sup>24</sup> See above (Section 4.2.5) for a description of Dear’s (1994) three postmodernisms: postmodernism as method; postmodernism as style; and postmodernism as epoch.



how we know the world) and political economy sits closer to ontology (crudely, how the world is for us to know it). So cultural economists might do ethnographies of political economy (see Pierce 1996, Hertz 1998 or Riles 2001, for example).

In this thesis, however, I am treating ethnography and political economy as two complementary modes of research practice – as, in a sense, of the same order. I indicate above that I am doing this with reference to the new transnationalism literature. Both Ong (1999) and Smith (2001) define ethnography and political economy narrowly, in response to their readings of certain literatures. They hold that the globalisation literature privileges the macro or economic logic, and is comprised of research self-described as political economy, and they hold that postmodernism and diaspora studies privilege the micro or texts, narratives and subjectivities, and are comprised of research self-described as ethnography. In this context, then, the significant difference between ethnography and political economy becomes the ethnographer's focus on creative individuals or micro-level action, and the political economist's focus on contextually situated individuals or macro-economic and macro-political context. Like Ong and Smith, then, in the present study I seek to balance ethnography and political economy, the micro and the macro, creative individuals and contextually situated individuals. And there is one more thing to say about ethnography, political economy and the relationship between the two. For Ong, political economy seems to describe an almost given or natural context within which individuals operate under constraints. For Smith, however, political economy seems to describe something much more active and fluid. He is careful not to reify political economy, and to characterise macro-level context as the product of continual and contested material and discursive practices. This position of Smith's exhibits similarities with Giddens (1984) theory of structuration. Of the two, it is my preferred position – it should become clear in Chapters 5 and 6 that my corporate interviewees are not rational economic men, but are rather sometimes romantic men and women, forever discussing, debating and disagreeing with each other. I return to political economy in Section 4.3.2. For now I turn to ethnography, which I view as relatively problematic, in terms of its history (modernist ethnography, concerned – at its worst – with passive, traditional people and peripheral, disappearing cultures) and its present (postmodernist ethnography, concerned – at its worst – with culture as text, and unconcerned with the

role of power in identity making and social change). For now, therefore, I turn to my specific choice of ethnography. It has two origins: Geertz's (1973) thick description; and Burawoy's (1998) extended case method.

By thick description, Geertz (1973) means describing what is done (contracting eyelids or chasing woolly animals, for example – thin description) but also sorting through structures of signification, frames of interpretation, symbol systems, to arrive at the meaning of what is done (winking or sheep raiding – thick description). It involves being actor-oriented: understanding the formulae actors use to define what happens to them; understanding their conceptual world. And it involves microscopic study: exceedingly extended acquaintances with extremely small matters and local truths, from which jumps must be made to broader interpretations, abstract analyses, general visions. For Geertz, then, ethnography involves a double task: thick description or inscription (setting down the meaning actions have for actors) and specification or diagnosis (stating what this demonstrates about the actors' society, and social life more generally).

Geertz points to some weaknesses of thick description. As ethnographers, our data are our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their colleagues do. At best, they are second order interpretations. Our data are fictions: something made, fashioned, imagined. Rather than discovering meaning, we guess at meanings, assess the guesses, and draw explanatory conclusions from the better guesses. How might such guesses be appraised though? How might we tell the better accounts from the worse ones? The search for meaning is always inconclusive, incomplete, contestable. Geertz also points to some strengths, however, and argues that these strengths outweigh the weaknesses. He writes (p28):

There is an Indian story – at least I heard it as an Indian story – about an Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which rested on the back of a turtle, asked [...] what did the turtle rest on? Another turtle. And that turtle? “Ah, Sahib, after that it is turtles all the way down”.

It is the condition of things that we never get to the bottom of anything we write about. But, through ethnography as thick description, we converse with other people. We clarify what goes on in places. We reduce puzzlement. We may not inscribe the event of

speaking, but we inscribe the 'said' of speaking. We provide the sociological mind of mega-concepts with bodied stuff (specific, circumstantial, concrete, realistic, densely textured stuff) on which to feed. We may report no conclusions, but we sustain discussion. And we may not answer questions, but we make available the answers of others by including them in the consultable record of what has been said.

Burawoy (1998) describes ethnography as writing about the world from the standpoint of participant observation, and as the study of others in their own space and time. He distinguishes between two approaches to ethnography: positive science and reflexive science. The positive approach assumes that there is an external world separate from social science, from which researchers must keep their distance and insulate themselves, with which researchers must limit their involvement, and which researchers must observe from outside, interrogate through intermediaries, to avoid affecting or distorting the field. The positive approach seeks to measure, reduce and control context effects or noise: interview effects (the interviewer and the interview schedule affect the respondent); respondent effects (respondents interpret questions in different ways); field effects (interviews can not be isolated in time and place, from political, social and economic context); and situation effects (knowledge does not reside in individuals but is constituted in social situations).

Burawoy points to problems with positive science. Observing and extracting information through a fixed prism makes researchers unresponsive to the flux of everyday life. Studies cannot be replicated despite standardised survey sheets because ethnographic encounters are always unique – the data we collect depends on who we are (white, male etc.). By concentrating on context effects, researchers ignore questions of power. He writes "Context is not noise disguising reality but reality itself" (p13). Reflexive science is one way out of these problems for Burawoy. The reflexive approach to ethnography assumes social orders reveal themselves in the way they respond to pressure, so engagement, intervention, dialogue (as opposed to detachment) is the road to knowledge. Reflexive science seeks to manage power effects: domination (outsider social scientists either dominate or are dominated by insiders, rendering knowledge partial); silencing (we register voices but, by compiling observations made in different situations into a social

process – see below – we reduce these voices to congealed interests, thus excluding, marginalising and distorting some voices); objectification (making social forces appear external or natural, when they are the effects of shifting processes); and normalisation (tailoring complex situations to fit a theory, and tailoring theory to fit a case). Burawoy suggests that we display the effects of power so that they might be better understood and contained. And he suggests that we look out for repressed and new voices.

Burawoy's extended case method begins with dialogue between observer and participants. It proceeds by embedding this first dialogue within a second dialogue, between local processes and extralocal forces. Finally, it embeds this second dialogue within a third dialogue of pre-existing theory. The aim is not to confirm theory, but to refute it; to elaborate, extend, reconstruct, complexify theory. It is also to extract the general from the unique, the singular, the mundane; to connect the present to the past; to move from the micro (lived experience) to the macro (the grand historical themes, political and economic context, extralocal determinations, social forces). He calls these moves 'extending out from the field'. And he acknowledges the reduction involved: from situational knowledge involving multiple narratives and voices to social process.

My choice of ethnography originates in these two methods: thick description and the extended case method. They differ in many subtle ways. But they share a number of principles. Ethnography involves a multiple task. First, dialogue between the researcher and the researched, to understand their conceptual worlds (thick description or inscription). Second, extending out from the field: embedding the first dialogue within a second dialogue, not between the micro and the macro, or the local and the global, since the global is always everywhere in the local and *vice versa*, but between the particular (empirical study) and the general (geographical and historical context; the big stories of social science and the humanities) – diagnosis or specification. Due to power effects (domination, silencing, objectification and normalisation), this double task produces no conclusions and answers no questions. Rather, it produces second order interpretations, fictions, uncertain knowledge. But it also produces clarification, inscription, bodied stuff. It sustains conversation and makes available the answers of others. And it enables the elaboration and extension of theory.

#### *4.3.2 How well did these approaches translate into the field?*

The research involved nine months fieldwork in Australia between November 2001 and July 2002. Much of this time was spent in Sydney, where I was kindly hosted by geographers at Macquarie University and the University of Sydney, but lived with British WHMs in Newtown. (Recall from Chapter 1 that 53% of backpackers arrive in Sydney – Thoms 1999 – and 79% visit Sydney – Buchanan and Rossetto 1997). I took brief trips to Canberra and Melbourne, and longer trips to Maroopna (a small community of fruit growers in Victoria) and Cairns (visited for its proximity to the Great Barrier Reef by 48% of backpackers – Buchanan and Rossetto 1997). The research involved one philosophical position (of many origins – reflexive realism, critical constructivism, post-Marxism, structuration theory, Actor Network Theory, pragmatic universalism), two modes of research practice (political economy and ethnography) and four methods or techniques: paper-based contextual work; corporate interviews; participant observation; and in-depth interviews with WHMs.

##### *Paper-based contextual work*

The day after I arrived in Sydney, heavy with jet-lag, I attended the Adventure and Backpacker Industry Conference 2001, to hear (and come to feel overwhelmed by) papers from Philip Ruddock, Australia's Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs ('Australia's working holiday programme'); Jackie Kelly, Australia's Minister for Tourism ('Growing the industry'); Mairin Colleary, Director, USIT NOW ('What is happening in the wide world of budget and adventure travel?'); James Parker, Chief Executive Officer, TNT Magazine ('Getting into the minds of backpackers'); Alan Collingwood, Chief Executive Officer, Travellers Contact Point, and Gregor Macauley, Chief Executive Officer, Student Uni Travel ('International and local travel: Changes, future direction and the implications for the industry'); and Stephen Welsh, President, Queensland Backpackers and Independent Travellers Industry Association ('Childers: The investigation and its effects on the industry').

I spent many hours in Sydney's libraries. In the State Library of New South Wales, in a reading room so beautiful it transformed even the driest of documents, I read histories, geographies and travellers' tales of Australia (Birmingham 2000, Bryson 2001, Carey 2001, Chambers 1999, Condon 1996, Jacobson 1988, Pilger 1992a, 1992b, 1998, 2001), reports on the backpacker market in Australia (Buchanan and Rossetto 1997, Commonwealth Department of Tourism 1995, Dale and Lound 1999, Haigh 1995, Office of National Tourism 1998, Stimson *et al* 1996, Thoms 1999, Tourism New South Wales 2000), and reports on Australia's working holiday programme (Bell and Carr 1994, Dignam 1990, Murphy 1995, National Population Council's Migration Committee 1991, Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration 1997). In two city libraries, one in Randwick and one in Waverley, both in coastal locations popular with WHMs, I read local histories (Atkins 1977, Cass and Cass 2000, Dowd 1959, Drew *et al* 1993, Lawrence 2001, Randwick Municipal Council 1985, Waugh 2001) and searched the archives of seven local newspapers for stories relevant to my research.

From the Internet, I downloaded relevant stories from four British newspapers (*The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Times*) and two Australian newspapers (*The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*). I also downloaded *Employment Opportunities for Young People in the Australian Construction Industry* (1999), a discussion paper from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union ([www.cfmeu.asn.au](http://www.cfmeu.asn.au)); unemployment rates in Australia 1992-2002 ([www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)); exchange rates, British Pounds for Australian Dollars, 1992-2002 ([www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com)); *The 2001 UK Gap Year Report* ([www.gapyear.com](http://www.gapyear.com)); *Tourism after 11 September: Analysis, Remedial Actions and Prospects* (2002), a special report from the World Tourism Organisation ([www.world-tourism.org](http://www.world-tourism.org)); press releases and fact sheets from the Ministers for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs ([www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)) and Employment and Workplace Relations ([www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)); *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain* (2002) and *Working Holidaymaker Scheme: Consultation Document* (2002), two papers from the UK Government's Home Office ([www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)); and *The Waverley Council Annual Report 2000-1*, press releases and fact sheets (including results for the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census

1996) from the Mayors of Randwick ([www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au)) and Waverley ([www.waverley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au)).

Living in Sydney, moving in backpacker spaces, I encountered numerous brochures, the backpacker magazines *TNT Magazine*, *British Balls*, *Backpacker Essentials* and *The Word: Backpacking Australia*, and the potential emigrant magazine *Australian Outlook*. In addition to this open style of research, I approached specific organisations with specific requests. I approached TNT Magazine and USIT World for the reports *Backpackers Uncovered* (2001) and *Understanding New Zealand's Backpacker Market* (no date); YHA NSW for their *2001 Annual Report*; Lonely Planet Publications for their Catalogue, Notes for Editors and Style Manual; DIMIA for their Procedures Advice Manual (Schedule 2, Working Holiday Visa 417(1)) and Migration Regulations (Subclass 417 Working Holiday (1)); and Randwick City Council for their *Submission to Inquiry into the Structure of Local Government in Eight Council Areas in the Inner City and Eastern Suburbs of Sydney* (2000), State Environment Planning Policy 10 (Retention of Low-Cost Rental Accommodation), *State of the Environment Report 2001*, *Randwick Local Environment Plan 1998*, and *Backpacker Accommodation Development Control Plan* (2000).

### *Corporate interviews*

This paper-based contextual work was one method of my political economy approach. The other technique of this mode of research practice consisted of 17 interviews with individuals involved in some official capacity with Australia's WHP and backpacker industry, from Julian Ledger, Chief Executive Officer, YHA NSW, to Chris Dorrian, Senior Officer (Tourism and Working Holiday Makers), DIMIA. (See Appendix B for full details of corporate interviewees). These interviews were relatively unstructured, non-directive, unstandardised, open-ended. I wanted frank discussions, to generate intersubjective understandings, to elicit world views (Cook and Crang 1995). I wanted intensive conversations, to establish causal process, to access deep emotions, thoughts and experiences (Sayer and Morgan 1985). I was less interested in the strengths of highly structured, standardised and directive interviews (replicability, reliability, statistical generalisability) than their weaknesses. Scientific observers can never extract unbiased

data from a detached position. Interviews always elicit the reaction of the researched to the researcher (Cook and Crang 1995). Surveys make assumptions about language and meaning, that questions are interpreted identically by researcher and researched. They ignore anything resistant to consistent coding (real world predicaments and strategies, entangled constraints and possibilities, historical contingencies and circumstances). They seek to resolve or eliminate ambiguity, when ambiguity is often the lesson. They fail to access certain kinds of knowledge, such as strategic decision making. They deal better with effects (correlation) than underlying rationales (causation). And they more often frustrate than intellectually engage respondents, so that respondents adapt answers to categories, having lost interest and to save time (Schoenberger 1991).

This is not to suggest that qualitative corporate interviews are straightforward. Since they involve a filtering process (respondent interprets events, researcher interprets respondent's interpretations), I worked at closing the distance between myself and my interviewees through preparation (I read company websites, annual reports etc.) and self-presentation (I sought to mirror the business attire and etiquette of interviewees) (Cook and Crang 1995). Preparation also gave me some confidence to control these corporate interviews more than I might have done, since many respondents were accustomed to exerting authority (Schoenberger 1991). (I discuss further these themes of distance and control under the heading *Transcription* below). After Schoenberger (1991), I built checks into my interview strategy, both external (I checked the answers of respondents against annual reports etc.) and internal (I revisited questions and answers at various times through each interview, asking for clarification). I should state that I did not follow Schoenberger's model of the corporate interview to the letter. Ultimately, Schoenberger seeks coherence; accounts that are logical, consistent, plausible, satisfying. I did not, since "There is nothing so coherent as a paranoid's delusion or a swindler's story" (Geertz 1973: 18).

### *Participant observation*

For my ethnography approach, I employed two further methods: participant observation and in-depth interviews with WHMs. Participant observation allowed me to get beyond the conscious knowledge of WHMs. I was interested in all WHM behaviour, including



the unconsidered, the taken-for-granted, the habitual. I was interested in what WHMs do as well as what they say. After all, we don't always practice what we preach. And we know much more than we can ever tell (Thrift 1996). I therefore immersed myself in the everyday rhythms and routines of WHMs, to experience their relationships and emotional states, to feel what it was like first-hand (Cook and Crang 1995). Cook and Crang (1995) divide the technique of participant observation into three stages: gaining access; living and working among people, learning their world views and ways of life; and returning home to make sense and write up. Gaining access presented me with few problems. By its very nature, Australia's WHM community is relatively open to newcomers, especially those who look and sound the part (under 30 years of age, white, in good physical health, English-speaking). Having said that, I wish to emphasise that my role in Australia was always as researcher, and my experiences and observations were necessarily filtered through that role. I chose to operate overtly much of the time and covertly some of the time. Both positions have their advantages. Operating overtly, I was able to discuss my project with WHMs, and produce intersubjective understandings and mutually acceptable texts. Operating covertly, I was able to control for the researcher's gaze, under which people behave differently (Cook and Crang 1995).

Living and working among WHMs (stage two), I kept a field diary, in which I sought to record everything. I noted the process of buying my ticket to Australia; the contents of my rucksack on leaving and returning to England; the practices and overheard conversations of WHMs; and the background to all of this, the current affairs of Australia in 2001-2 (debates on the treatment of refugees, Australia's carrying capacity, the 2001 Census, the insurance crisis, the collapse of Ansett, and the management of bush fires, floods and drought). I also noted my feelings along the way; how my self-confidence came and went through the first few months of research, as people were friendly and helpful or not; how I constantly battled against my own prejudices, that Australia is a certain kind of place, that WHMs are certain kinds of people, and that a working holiday involves certain kinds of activities; and how I swung between the comfort of these prejudices and the discomfort of facing overwhelming complexity. I deal with stage three, returning home to make sense and write up, under the headings *Transcription* and *Narrative Analysis* below.

### *In-depth interviews with WHMs*

I recruited WHMs for in-depth interviews through snowballing. I found Leah through Carl (workmates), Carl through Al (housemates), Tracey through Vinnie (friends from university) etc. (In total, I interviewed 19 WHMs. See Appendix C for details). My sampling was theoretical (appropriate groups, quality, positionality), as opposed to the random sampling of statistical research (number, typicality, representativeness) (Cook and Crang 1995). Rather than seeking the truth or to prove an hypothesis, I sought multiple and competing versions of reality, a full range of stories, what Cook and Crang (1995) term ‘theoretical saturation’, which is not as ambitious as it sounds, since people make sense of life through talk with others and exposure to common information. At the top of each interview guide (see Appendix D for a copy of the interview guide), after noting the venue, date and time of the interview, and commenting on my relationship to the researched (how we met, my first impressions), I recorded a number of details required to position each respondent in multiple ways: location of interview (Sydney, Maroopna or Cairns, and also hostel or private rented accommodation); gender<sup>25</sup>, race and age (self-ascribed); nationality (British, Irish or Dutch); most recent place of residence (in Britain, Ireland or the Netherlands), and also, if different, most long-term place of residence; time in Australia to date; occupation, income, father’s occupation, mother’s occupation, paternal grandfather’s occupation, maternal grandfather’s occupation; and duration of schooling, highest educational qualification, highest educational qualification of father, mother and both grandfathers. These last two items were inspired by Bourdieu (1984), who positions interviewees in social space in terms of conditions of existence (volume and composition of capital), social origin and education. I found Bourdieu’s work on class fractions useful in the field, with one reservation. Bourdieu seems to assume that individuals operate either alone or with members of the same class fraction. But I encountered numerous WHMs from different class fractions travelling together, and making travel decisions together. I return to Bourdieu and social

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<sup>25</sup> My final sample is detailed (by location, gender etc.) in Appendix C. There is one point to note. Compared to DIMIA statistics (Appendix A), women are overrepresented in my sample. I have no explanation for this. I set out to recruit an equal number of men and women. But I found some difficulty recruiting men. Whether this has more to do with male WHMs, the nature of the project, or me personally, I do not know.

class in Chapter 5. As for the interviews themselves, each WHM was interviewed twice, to establish confidence, rapport and trust, to reveal ambiguous, inconsistent, contradictory feelings, and to get beyond stranger talk and the short, pretold, rehearsed stories with which people are comfortable (Cook and Crang 1995). Between interviews, with the second interview in mind, I asked respondents to list all the objects they brought to Australia with them, and all the objects they acquired in Australia, and to complete a one-week diary, detailing activities, communications and transactions against clocktime and mapspace (see Appendix E for a copy of the diary guide).

### *Transcription*

All interviews, whether corporate or in-depth with WHMs, were recorded on tape and transcribed within a couple of days. One problem with this process of recording and transcribing is that complex, rich, emotional life becomes dry, cold, flat script (Cook and Crang 1995). I sought to overcome this problem in various ways. During the interviews, I noted the body language the tape recorder did not, aware as I did so that body language is far from transparent. During transcription, I noted the emotional edge to responses (serious or sarcastic, fervent or off-hand). Short of inserting punctuation (which helps to communicate *how* things were said), I transcribed each interview 'warts and all'. I refused to tidy questions and answers. I left ambiguity untouched. And, at the second interview with WHMs, I gave respondents the transcript of the first interview and asked them to read it at a later date and contact me with comments. I did this despite the difficulties it posed. I worked under pressure to transcribe the first interview in time for the second interview. I was only asking them to comment on the transcript, not my interpretation of it. And few respondents seemed interested in this exercise – not one came back to me with comments.

There was a part of each interview transcript I never returned for comment. This consisted of notes made of things said after the tape recorder was switched off. I learnt very quickly to leave the tape running for as long as possible, since interviewees often relaxed and opened up towards the end of sessions, once rapport had been established. But I also learnt to stop the tape before closing sessions, since an opportunity to speak

‘off the record’ seemed important to some interviewees. This part of each transcript also consisted of answers I wrote to four questions I asked myself on leaving each interview.

*Question one: What (social) distance existed between the respondent and myself, as an influence on interpretation for both sides?* I struggled with the local government and environmental law speak of Alan Graham, Building and Development Control Officer, Randwick City Council. I also struggled with the travel agent speak of Rachel Jeavoms, Office Manager, Austravel, just as she struggled with my academic geography speak. Frank and Heidi, my two Dutch WHM interviewees, spoke English far better than I speak Dutch, but our interviews involved many pauses and much rephrasing of questions and answers.

*Question two: How did I personally (my subjectivity, my interview technique) affect the respondent and the interview?* After my interview with Al, a WHM and former consumer strategist, he commented that my face lit up every time it sounded like he was going to give me the answer I wanted. I arrived to interview Rachel Jeavoms, Office Manager, Austravel, in a terrible mood. That morning, I had stumbled out of bed and stubbed my toe on a chest of drawers. I had put on my coat and broken the zipper. I had left Stoke-on-Trent for Bristol and forgotten the car radio. And approximately one mile into the drive, a stone had jumped off the road and cracked my windscreen. The interview was remarkably short. Despite my best intentions, I suspect that my terrible mood played its part in this. There are alternative examples. During interviews with WHMs Amanda and Heidi, it seems that I did something right. Barely audible at first, Amanda’s voice grew louder and louder as the session progressed. By the end, she was gesturing with her hands and engaging me with her eyes. There was a pivotal moment in my interview with Heidi, when she sat back in her chair and slowly exhaled. From that point on, she seemed comfortable talking to me in a way that she had not been before.

*Question three: How did the respondent (their position, their behaviour) affect me and the interview?* My first corporate interview was with Michael Burns, Senior Migration Officer, Australian High Commission, on 14 September 2001. He arrived late, told me he was very busy, and suggested that we speak for 25 minutes until the memorial service

for the victims of 9/11 began. Faced with this context, I felt my own project so insignificant I rushed through my questions without ever turning the tape recorder on. In my first few corporate interviews in Australia, I received answers beginning “Aw, look!”, which I read as a sign of impatience, and hurried through my questions accordingly. Only later did I come to understand that some Australians use “Aw, Look!” in the same way that some English people use “Listen!”. The implication is not that someone should look or listen more carefully. Rather, they are both just habitual, superfluous, relatively meaningless sentence openings. With time, I think I got better at controlling each corporate interview, or, rather, playing my equal part in each conversation. I learnt from Charlotte Hindle, General Manager UK, Lonely Planet Publications, that enthusiasm is contagious. She made clear that she was serious about, committed to and proud of her work, and I responded. From then on, I did the same regarding my work, and, with few exceptions, my corporate interviewees reacted well. WHM respondents affected me and the interview also. Rightly or wrongly, I was struck dumb by Shirley’s beauty. Well, almost: I spoke quietly; I was abrupt – I behave like this when I’m nervous. Tracey’s boyfriend was waiting for us in the pub, and I suspect this contributed to the brevity of her answers. Paul was in the process of applying for jobs, and his interview transcript reads like a job interview. Vinnie was about to be sacked from work, and could think of little else. I interviewed Jeanne when she had just left her boyfriend. She sat on the floor with her arms crossed in front of her shins. For long parts of Jeanne’s tape, I sound less like a researcher and more like some counsellor from American television.

*Question four: Did I trust the interviewee?* This last question requires some clarification. I was not interested in whether they had told me the truth, in the ‘correspondence theory of truth’ sense. But I was interested in the degree to which they had opened up to me, told me what they think, left nothing out, given me their personal view. Rachel Jeavoms, Office Manager, Austravel, clearly gave me the company line and no more. By contrast, Olivia Jenkins, Research Manager, Tourism Taskforce, distinguished between her own views and those of the company, as did Tony Barrington (General Manager, Recruitment Solutions), Chris Dorrian (Senior Officer, Tourism and Working Holiday Makers, DIMIA) and Alan Collingwood (Chief Executive Officer, Travellers Contact Point). These last two made a further distinction, between views they were happy to state on the

record, and views they insisted must be off the record. Mark Williams, General Manager, The Word: Backpacking Australia, asked to see my questions before I pressed play on the tape recorder. He asked for time to consider some responses. I suspect he could have said a lot more than he did. By contrast, in the same interview, Cathy Hanan, Mark's Editor, talked and talked, seemingly oblivious to his more cautious approach. Among my WHM interviewees, some seemed to perform roles for me more than others. Paul performed the role of job applicant. He stressed the positive side to his working holiday (transferable skills), and was less forthcoming about other things, such as borrowing money from his parents. Kyra performed the role of laid-back, easy-going traveller. I asked her what she knew about Australia before she left England. She replied "I didn't research it at all. Nobody had mentioned anything. I just dumped myself here and that was it. What happens happens [...]. I didn't have a clue. I knew it was over here but I didn't know what". Both Katy and Vinnie were particularly concerned about how they 'came across' in interview ("boring", "mercenary"). Both Jeanne and Carl made it clear that vague references to 'problems at home' should not be pursued.

I made two further sets of annotations on my own copies of the interview transcripts. One set attended to questions of (mis)interpretation. Respondents interpreted my questions in numerous, often unexpected and interesting, ways. A common practice was to answer one question by following on from the answer to a previous question. For example, Amanda and I were talking about homesickness. Then I asked her another question: "Do you think anyone can do this [take a working holiday]?". She replied "Yeah. Anyone could. I suppose the only thing, you know, if you're the sort of person who might get homesick a lot". There were many other examples. In time, I learnt to play around with the order in which I asked my questions. The other set of annotations considered group dynamics where corporate interviews contained more than one respondent. From TNT Magazine, I interviewed James Parker, Chief Executive Officer, and Lance Batty, Research Manager. Without the presence of Lance, I wonder how much James would have told me. Initially, for each question, James would refuse to be drawn. Only after Lance had given his view, would James feel inclined to give his own. From The Word: Backpacking Australia, I interviewed Mark Williams, General Manager, and Cathy Hanan, Editor. They disagreed with each other on many of the

topics I raised for discussion. It was fascinating to hear the debates I was interested in played out before my ears, and my tape recorder. There was another side to these group dynamics, of course. From DIMIA, I interviewed Chris Dorrian, Senior Officer (Tourism and Working Holiday Makers), and Olivia Shepherd, Officer (Tourism and Working Holiday Makers). Chris was an accomplished civil servant. He was very careful about what he said. He was also the senior figure in the room, and cut Olivia short each time she sounded like opening up.

### *Narrative Analysis*

Since in-depth interviews with WHMs were relatively unstructured, I treat the transcripts as personal narratives, stories of the self, autobiographies: the everyday experience of ordinary individuals as formulated in their own words. There seem to be three current debates in the literature on interpreting personal narratives. First, do they reflect or construct inner experience and external reality? A strong case can be made for the latter (Bruner 1987, Finnegan 1997). Stories are distorted, made indeterminate, through processes of selective memory recall, interpretation, and telling. They are mediated and shaped by the conventions through which they are told (more on this below). They formulate and organise their teller's experience. I do not reject completely the former position, however, that personal narratives may be reflective in some way. Stories generally refer to facts and events in addition to thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and intentions (Cook and Crang 1995).

The second debate might be termed 'creativity or constraint?'. Story tellers are thinking, creative, artistic actors. But they do not operate in a cultural vacuum. They are not autonomous or free. Rather, they share an imaginary with others. Their stories draw on shared cultural resources and exhibit recurrent conventions, stock themes, common motifs: heroes and heroines, victims and villains, quests and adventures, journeys from rags to riches, falls from grace, battles of good and evil, continuity, sequence, progress, coherence, order, meaning (Bruner 1987, Finnegan 1997). Personal narratives, then, must be approached as both individually created (uniquely personal) and culturally constrained (not purely personal). They must be interpreted with an eye for rich individuals, differing personalities, and unique experiences, but also common topics.

protagonists, and plots (Finnegan 1997). A final point to make here draws on Giddens' theory of structuration (1984). Subjects may be cultured, but, in turn, they play a creative role in shaping conventions, in formulating culture. In Bruner's words: "narrative imitates life, life imitates narrative" (1987: 13).

Third, do we interpret personal narratives as text or performance? Finnegan (1997) argues for the latter. Stories are delivered on one particular occasion (one time, one place), their delivery is an interactive process (involving an audience for whom emphases are selected), and they are not carefully meditated or worked up. Bruner supports this performance approach, and warns us to be mindful of performance effects: "a rousing tale of a life is not necessarily a 'right' account" (1987: 24). For the most part, I support it too, though I do see some value in framing personal narratives as text (within a wider interpretative strategy). Textual analysis provides some useful devices, such as inclusions and omissions, cardinal functions (nuclei or hinge-points, on which stories hang) and catalysts (fillers, on which discourses hang) (see Barthes 1977).

### *Madness*

It should be clear by now that my fieldwork did not quite proceed in a logical, linear fashion. Rather, like most research in the social sciences, if reported honestly, the process was iterative and messy, confusing and frustrating. For various reasons, certain methods or techniques were discarded along the way. In their paper on ethnographic research, in addition to participant observation and interviews, Cook and Crang (1995) discuss focus groups and filmic approaches. Focus groups are useful because research subjects are not "pure and isolated sources of data" (p56). Rather, they work out their thoughts and feelings through interactions with others. They negotiate meanings through intra- and inter-personal debates. Their memories are jolted by others. I chose not to use focus groups because, in order to get the most out of them, they should be run more than once with the same group (for the usual reasons: to establish trust, rapport etc.). It was difficult enough to get individual WHMs to sign up for two interview sessions, given their mobile lifestyle. I judged it would be almost impossible to get the same seven or eight WHMs together more than once. As for filmic approaches, and photography in particular, Cook and Crang (1995) note that photographs are not factual records of the



field. They do not capture reality. They are not transparent media for recording and presenting facts. Rather, they are taken purposively and displayed in social, economic and cultural contexts. They are acts of self-presentation. They are taken with an audience and a favourable reception in mind. The value of looking at photo albums or giving research subjects disposable cameras, therefore, is that photographs tell us much about expected, proper, acceptable behaviour. They tell us the social meanings people want to communicate; the identities they want to express. I chose not to use this filmic approach for entirely practical reasons. It was enough to squeeze the four methods detailed above into my short time in Australia. And when, unexpectedly, some time became free towards the end of my stay, by then my funding was spent (disposable cameras retail for AU\$16 in Sydney). For similar practical reasons of time and money, I chose not to interview WHMs before they left for Australia, during their working holiday, and on their return home. As with focus groups and photography, I understand the benefits of longitudinal research, which allows us to track consistency and change over time. It was just not practical.

If these discarded techniques constitute one question hanging over the research, then difficulties encountered using the four methods I chose to run with constitute another. Numerous problems were encountered in the field. I arrived in Australia one week after the General Election. A Cabinet reshuffle was in process. Government Departments were negotiating new titles and portfolios. Their websites were 'down'. So contacts among those regulating Australia's WHP and backpacker industry were difficult to come by, at least initially. I began this project with a new tape recorder. It took a few interview sessions to realise that it worked best on speed 2.4cm and not 1.2cm, and with the Voice Operated Record function switched off. Still, I had no choice but to conduct some interviews in noisy settings. As a result, I have sections of unclear tape, particularly for interviews with Cathy Hanan (Editor, *The Word: Backpacking Australia*), Kathleen Kenny (Chief Executive Officer, *Free Spirit*), and Tracey (a WHM interviewee). There are other more general problems with these methods. How much is this research about me personally? I spent nine months in Australia reading, listening, observing and participating, but the information I returned to England with necessarily reflects my social position as white, male, middle-class, under 30 years of age, and of

dual nationality (born in Britain of New Zealand parents). Another researcher may have read, listened, observed and participated differently to me. How much information did I miss during the fieldwork? What I remembered and wrote down in my diary represents a tiny amount of what I saw and felt. Presumably some WHMs chose to avoid the weird guy from Bristol University. It is possible others lied to me, or misled me unintentionally – this also applies to the corporate interviews. All my claims will be made from a total of 36 interviews. They will be my interpretations of the interpretations of others, presented for you the reader to interpret.

The point of this final section is not to undo what has gone before. Rather, it is to bring these techniques and this chapter round a full circle, back to philosophy and methodology. It does not concern me, in any fundamental sense, that my fieldwork was messy, methods were discarded, difficulties encountered, and that, as a result, my claims must be positioned, partial, and steeped in the problems of interpretation and representation. Why? Because, after humanism, I seek not to predict the world, but to help guide a way through it, and I seek not explanation, but understanding, and believe a unified human nature makes some empathetic understanding possible, based on translation and dialogue, however incomplete and imperfect. (How else do we ‘go on’ in the world?). Also, after Albrow (1996), I seek not to conclude but to persuade, and not to affirm timeless truths but to affirm truths on the best understanding available to me in my own time. And after Geertz (1973), I know that we never get to the bottom of things, so I seek not to know everything, but to understand something, and to collect bodied stuff not to draw conclusions from, but to sustain discussion. The next three chapters contain this bodied stuff and my positioned and partial understanding of it. Each chapter addresses a question. How has it come to this, that on any one day we may find almost 50,000 WHMs working and holidaying in Australia? What are the implications of such working holidays for their makers? And what are the implications of this WHM presence for Australia and Australians?

## CHAPTER 5: MOBILITY AND AGENCY<sup>26</sup>

### 5.1 Introduction

How has it come to this, that on any one day we may find almost 50,000 WHMs working and holidaying in Australia? In part, this is a question about the origins of contemporary transnational corporeal mobility. So what do the literatures reviewed in Chapter 2 (tourism) and Chapter 3 (globalisation, transnationalism, mobility) tell us about these origins? Some commentators identify a single or at least primary force for mobility. In the tourism literature, Boorstin (1964) emphasises the tourist desire for pseudo-events, structured by economic and cultural institutions and products (travel agents, guidebooks, newspapers, movies). MacCannell (1976) emphasises the tourist desire for authenticity, structured by discontinuous modernity. And Britton (1991) argues that, since tourism is an important avenue for capitalist accumulation, it is driven by the inherent and defining social dynamics of capitalism. In the globalisation literature, Harvey (1989) looks to capitalism's historical-geographical development also: mobility results from time-space compression, which in turn results from economic restructuring (transition in the regime of accumulation and mode of social and political regulation from Fordist-Keynsian to flexible accumulation and neoconservatism-entrepreneurialism-postmodernism).

Many commentators, of course, are less happy with such a uni-dimensional approach to mobility. In the tourism literature, Cohen (1972, 1979, 1984) emphasises the tourist desire for novelty and strangeness, but acknowledges the importance of transportation and communications technologies and the rise of a monied middle-class. And Löfgren (1999) acknowledges the tourist desire to gaze upon extraordinary scenes, but emphasises the tourist desire for body pleasures: sunbathing, swimming, walking barefoot in the sand. In the globalisation literature, Giddens (1990) links mobility to time-space distancing, which in turn he links to disembedding mechanisms (symbolic tokens and expert systems), the reflexive appropriation of knowledge, and all four institutions of

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modernity: capitalism, industrialism, surveillance, and military power. And Castells (1996) foregrounds the technological revolution which occurred in a particular segment of American society in the 1970s; a revolution which had its roots in the culture of individual freedom and innovation that grew out of American campuses in the 1960s, and in the US Defense Department Advanced Research Projects Agency; and a revolution which was accelerated, channelled and shaped over the next 30 years or so by the requirements of a capitalist class. As for the transnationalism literature, Field (1971) suggests that mobility originated in the market (the industrial revolution produced a split between world city and world farm, and made European capital available for export) and American ideology (steeped in Enlightenment thought and evangelical religion). Appadurai (1996) discusses economic opportunity, droughts and famines, leisure industries and tourist sites, and technologies of mobility: the automobile, the aeroplane, the camera, the computer, the telephone. Ong (1999) emphasises material and symbolic resources on the one hand, and the desire for capital, power and social prestige, or security and political refuge, on the other. And Smith (2001) identifies two key transnational political events – the end of the Cold War and the spread of the neo-liberal variant of globalisation – which he adds to new means of travel and communication, and the politically constructed policies of nation-states, to explain contemporary transnational corporeal mobility.

Given my position on philosophy and methodology in human geography (see Chapter 4), of the approaches listed above, Smith's (2001) agency-oriented approach to transnational urbanism, his "focus on the interplay of the macro-politics of state policy-making, the cultural politics of transnational media representations [...] and the micro-politics of transnational migrant social networks" (p13), strikes me as something worth pursuing. I begin this chapter with a brief and focused history of Australia. This tale of colonialism, discrimination, protectionism, humanitarianism, and multiculturalism provides essential context to what follows, both in this chapter and in Chapter 7. I continue by addressing the title of this chapter directly, and answering the question 'How has it come to this?' using categories of agency inspired by Smith (2001) and extended by myself: economics (micro and macro), macro-politics (state-policy making), cultural politics (transnational media representations), micro-politics (transnational migrant social networks), and non-

human actants (technologies and nature)<sup>27</sup>. I conclude this chapter with comments on the nature of the relationship between these categories of agency, and some more critical thoughts on forces for mobility and their apparent opposite: forces for fixity.

## 5.2 Mobility, fixity and Australian history

Australian history is in many ways a history of mobility and fixity. In *Leviathan: The Unauthorised Biography of Sydney*, John Birmingham writes “Sydney is almost wholly a migrant creation” (2000: 13). Similarly, in *Down Under*, John Bryson writes “The immigrant experience is essentially the story of modern Australia” (2001: 209). Very briefly, I present this story below, organised not into consecutive historical periods, but into four co-existing themes: Aboriginal Australia, Colonial Australia, White Australia, and Multicultural Australia.

### 5.2.1 Aboriginal Australia

Measured in years, Australia’s history is overwhelmingly Aboriginal. Aborigines arrived in Australia at least 53,000 years ago (Chambers 1999). It is thought that they were Australia’s first immigrants to arrive by sea, since Australia has always been an island (in human times), and has no ape-like creatures from which humans could have evolved. In the late eighteenth century, when Australia’s second wave of immigrants arrived by sea from Britain, it is estimated that there were between 300,000 and one million Aborigines in Australia (Chambers 1999, Bryson 2001). A century later, approximately 220,000 had died at the hands of these new British immigrants, either indirectly from smallpox, pleurisy, syphilis, chickenpox, measles, whooping cough, and influenza, or directly from shootings and hangings (Chambers 1999, Bryson 2001). Another century later, despite attempts to breed Aborigines out of existence (between 1910 and 1970, approximately 100,000 Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families by the Aborigines

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<sup>27</sup> To be clear from the start, these categories of agency are ‘in here’. They are narrative structuring devices. They are not ‘out there’. They are not discreet compartments of empirical reality, where the economic is always political and cultural, the political is always cultural and economic, the cultural is always economic and political, and all three always rest on moments of correspondence between capable individuals, technologies and nature.

Protection Board, and placed as free labour on sheep and cattle stations or in white middle-class homes – Pilger 1992a), Aboriginal Australia lives on: between 1948 and 1962 Aborigines were given the vote; and in 1967 they were counted as people and included in the Census.

### *5.2.2 Colonial Australia*

The first recorded visit by Europeans to Aboriginal Australia was by Dutch sailor Willem Jansz and his crew in 1606. The first important visit, however, in terms of Australia's subsequent history, was by Lieutenant James Cook in 1770. He returned to Britain with news of a new land to replace the recently lost penal colonies of America (Birmingham 2000, Bryson 2001). Seventeen years later, Captain Arthur Phillip led what has become known as the First Fleet to this land, arriving at Botany Bay in late January 1788. The First Fleet carried the first of approximately 160,000 convicts transported to Australia between 1788 and 1840 when transportation was abolished (Price 1981, Chambers 1999). In 1793, the first free settlers arrived in Australia. They continued to arrive through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To strengthen the British Empire by moving people from the overcrowded centre to the underpopulated periphery, assisted passages were offered to British citizens of the right health, age, sex, marital status and occupation, financed by the sale of Australian land to existing settlers and convicts. In addition to those diseases which devastated Australia's Aboriginal population, the boats of the first and subsequent fleets brought cotton bushes, coffee trees, banana trees, apple trees, pear trees, grapevines, bamboo, Spanish Reed, sugarcane. And the settlers built English style cities with English parks full of oak, beech, chestnut and elm trees (Birmingham 2000). In other words, the boats brought Britain, or, more accurately, England, to Australia. Until 1949 there was no such thing as Australian citizenship, and Australians studied British history and geography in school (Pilger 2001).

The 1940s was an important decade for colonial Australia. During the Second World War, with the fall of Burma and Singapore, Britain pulled out of the Far East, leaving Australia alone and exposed to the Japanese advance. On 26 December 1941, in a famous radio broadcast, Australian Prime Minister John Curtin announced "We look to

America” (quoted in Pilger 2001: 24). US troops arrived on Australian soil soon afterwards. Within three years, *The Readers Digest* had begun an Australian edition and Coca-Cola had gone on sale in Australia (Chambers 1999). In 1951, Australia, New Zealand and the US formalised their military alliance in the ANZUS Treaty. Fifty years later, Sydney’s skyline is Manhattanised and its vocabulary Americanised: from lifts to elevators; from holidays to vacations; from ‘I reckon’ to ‘I guess’ (Pilger 1992a). Yet America has not replaced Britain as colonial or even imperial power to Australia. Between 1949 and 1965, anglophile Robert Menzies was Prime Minister of Australia. Under Menzies, John Pilger remembers people imitating the English accents of those employed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and sticking cotton wool to Christmas cards under the summer sun (Pilger 1992a). Bill Bryson calls Australia “*Baywatch* with cricket” (2001: 196). It has a British-style Parliament divided into two American-style chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Whatever the degree to which each colonial/imperial power influences Australia today, one thing is certain: British Australia lives on in many strong ways. Sydney recalls Thomas Townsend, first Baron Sydney, Home and Colonial Secretary at the time of the First Fleet. Port Jackson recalls George Jackson, Admiralty Judge. Macquarie harbour, island, marsh, river, field, pass, plain, lake, port, point, and also bank, university, dictionary, and shopping centre recall Lachlan Macquarie, first Governor of the colony. I could go on. Moreover, the Queen’s official representative in Australia, the Governor General, retains the power to dissolve a democratically elected Australian Government (Governor General John Kerr did exactly this in 1972 to Gough Whitlam’s radical Labor Government). And, until the Australian Republican Movement wins a referendum (it lost one in 1999), Australian citizens must continue to swear allegiance to the Queen.

### 5.2.3 *White Australia*

In the early nineteenth century, Australia was a country of Aborigines, British convicts and British settlers. In the 1850s, news of gold mining in Victoria travelled around the world and this ceased to be the case. The Chinese population of Victoria grew from 2000 in 1853 to 40,000 in 1857 (Birmingham 2000). As it did so, British Australians became concerned that Chinese labour would undercut their work conditions, ‘spoil’ their

women, and infect society with opium and disease. Through the 1850s and 60s a number of anti-Chinese statutes were passed across Australia. In 1861, between 2000 and 3000 white miners rioted at Lambing Flat, scalping Chinese miners and setting alight the cradles of their children (Pilger 2001). (Lambing Flat is known today as Young, a cherry-growing community popular with some WHMs). In 1878, workers in Sydney went on strike to protest against Chinese immigration (Birmingham 2000). In 1899, the world's first labour government was formed, the Labor Government of Queensland, to protect the jobs of white workers from the bonded sugar-cane workers shipped in from the islands of the south-western Pacific (Pilger 1992a). These statutes, riots and strikes fed into the Immigration Restrictions Act of 1901 (unofficial title: the White Australia Policy). The Act aimed to prevent ethnic conflict and preserve living standards by keeping non-British migrants out of Australia through use of a dictation test, whereby potential immigrants could be tested in any European language, even Gaelic.

Back to the 1940s, that important decade for Colonial Australia, and now for White Australia too. Colonial Australia was scarred when abandoned by Britain after the fall of Singapore and Burma. White Australia was equally scarred by the experience of the Second World War. Japanese submarines attacked Sydney harbour in 1942. Japanese planes bombed Darwin, Wyndham, Broome and Townsville in 1943. Many Australian prisoners of war experienced the Burmese Railway, Changi Prison, and the Kokoda Trail. The result was a national fear, of the teeming and unstable countries to the north, of the Asiatic Hordes, the Yellow Peril. In 1947, Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, announced "We have 25 years at most to populate this country before the yellow races are down upon us" (quoted in Pilger 1992a: 87). Under the slogan 'Populate or Perish', he sent 400 immigration officers to Europe, with instructions to recruit around 100,000 migrants a year, and to use the dictation test and favour the European races (Pilger 1992a). At the outbreak of the Second World War, Australia was 90% what they called British ethnic (Price 1981). Calwell wanted 10 Britons to every 'foreigner', and, in the early 1950s, some 30,000 Britons arrived every month on the assisted package scheme which cost £10 – 10 Pound Poms (Pilger 1992a). But post-war Britain had its own problems: a shortage of young workers. So Australia had to look elsewhere too. Migration agreements were made with Malta (1948), the Netherlands (1951), Italy (1951)



and Germany (1952). Further agreements were made with Italy, Greece, Spain and Malta (1967-70) when targets could not be met from (whiter) northern Europe. Australia took in Poles, Yugoslavs and Czechs. And it moved from British Australia to European Australia, from Protestant Australia to Christian Australia, from Anglo-Celtic Australia to White Australia (Birmingham 2000).

#### 5.2.4 *Multicultural Australia?*

Through the second half of the twentieth century, this White Australia Policy became a problem for Australia at meetings of the Commonwealth Heads of State (Price 1981). In 1958 the dictation test was abolished as part of a revised Migration Act. Through the 1960s further modifications were made to immigration legislation allowing the entry of skilled or persecuted citizens of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. In 1965 the Australian Labor Party removed all reference to White Australia from its literature. Japan overtook Britain as Australia's biggest trading partner in 1966. In 1977, in the wake of the Vietnam War, a comprehensive refugee policy was established and officers were sent to Thailand to select refugees from Asia (Price 1981). For the next decade, it seemed that Multicultural Australia was replacing White Australia. The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was established in 1979 to raise awareness of diversity and promote social cohesion. The Office of Multicultural Affairs and the National Multicultural Advisory Council were established in 1987 to harness diversity for Australian national unity. The Advisory Council reported in 1989 and later that year a policy statement was tabled in Parliament – *The New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* – which celebrates diverse cultural heritages within a framework of Australian structures and values, seeks to maximise the economic, social and cultural benefits of diversity, and promotes harmonious living. To implement the Agenda, the Council for Multicultural Australia was established.

Indeed, though I do not advocate this, if one somehow overlooks the 'Tent Embassy' erected outside Parliament House by Aborigines in 1972, or the protest march, between 15,000 and 30,000 strong, through Sydney by Aborigines in 1988 during Australia's bicentenary celebrations, or the ongoing debates between aborigines, politicians and

businessmen (mining and agribusiness) over land rights and apologies (for past atrocities), then Australia appears just about as multicultural as countries get. It took in Lutheran dissenters from Prussia and Silesia in the mid-1800s (Jacobson 1988). It took in Italians when young men of voting age were 'encouraged' to emigrate in the 1920s and again in the 1950s (Pilger 1992a). It took in 15,000 Hungarians when Soviet tanks crushed the revolution of October 1956 (Chambers 1999). It took in Chileans when the Allende Government was overthrown in 1973, and Poles after Martial Law was declared in 1981 (DIMIA Fact Sheet). Through the 1990s, 40% of immigrants were from Asia (Chambers 1999). According to the 2001 Census, 27% of Australians and 38% of Sydneysiders were born overseas, and 20% of Australians and 34% of Sydneysiders speak a language other than English at home. Melbourne is the second biggest Greek city in the world (Pilger 2001). The fourth most common name in Melbourne is Nguyen (Bryson 2001). It is no coincidence that 'Modern Australian' cuisine fuses techniques and ingredients from across the world.

Yet, as stated above, White Australia and Multicultural Australia (and Aboriginal Australia and Colonial Australia for that matter) are not consecutive historical periods but co-existing themes. In 1984, popular historian Geoffrey Blainey ignited a national race debate in Australia when he connected race, culture and social crisis in comments about front-line suburbs full of spitting foreigners with their stinking food and flash cars (Pilger 1992a). Blainey was a major influence on the thoughts of both Pauline Hanson (founder of One Nation, an anti-immigration Parliamentary Party) and John Howard, the current Liberal-National Coalition Prime Minister (Birmingham 2000) – in 1988, Howard, then in opposition, shadowing the Labor Minister for Immigration, announced his One Australia Policy, arguing that non-European immigration creates social tension and destroys social cohesion. In similar fashion, Tim Flannery ignited a national debate about Australia's carrying capacity when he argued that Australia should set an optimum population target in his best-selling book *The Future Eaters* (1995). The debate gave rise to Australia's first Population Summit in March 2002. At the Summit, opposition leader Simon Crean, former Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Malcolm Fraser, and numerous business leaders called for an increase in immigration, since Australia's population is greying, and large populations bring economies of scale and competition which promotes

economic efficiency. Against this, environmentalists, represented by the Australian Conservation Foundation, pointed to existing strains on Australia's water resources (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 09/03/02). Two months after the Summit, in May 2002, DIMIA released its planned migrant intake for 2002/03. To address labour force bottlenecks (nurse shortages, for example), skilled and family migrant numbers were increased substantially, by 10% on 2001/02 figures, the largest increase for more than a decade, to between 100,000 and 110,000 (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 08/05/02). By contrast, the humanitarian programme was pegged at 12,000, the same number at which it has been fixed since the Liberal-National Coalition won office in 1996. As if to emphasise my question mark punctuating Multicultural Australia, in January 2002 Neville Roach, Chairman of the Council for Multicultural Australia, resigned in protest at the extent to which his government prioritises economic and border integrity concerns over compassion for refugees, who are given temporary protection visas but no settlement services such as English language training, and who are labelled queue jumpers and potential terrorists whose values are alien to Australia (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26/01/02).

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I return to this tale of forced, free, assisted and selective mobility, structured by economic, social and cultural concerns, in the sections below and in Chapter 7. The present chapter now continues with a discussion of forces for the mobility of WHMs, arranged into categories of agency.

### **5.3 Forces for mobility**

#### *5.3.1 Economics*

I arrived in Australia to begin my fieldwork on 15 November 2001. The following morning I attended The Backpacker and Adventure Industry Conference at the Pump House Museum in Darling Harbour, Sydney. I am not an economic geographer, but sitting in that hall surrounded by hundreds of accommodation owners and managers,

publishers and editors, transport and tour operators, and a myriad of other people with company names and occupational positions pinned to their chests, I realised that I could not get away from the fact that there must be an economic story to be told here. And there is. The backpacker industry in Australia is significant in size and growing and maturing rapidly. Cheap, fast and flexible air travel means that Amanda, one of my WHM interviewees, can comfort herself with the following: “You know home’s only a day away. If it goes terribly wrong you can get back on a plane and go home”. Other than airlines such as QANTAS, constituents of the industry include travel agents such as STA; tour operators such as Oz Experience; gap year companies such as Gap Challenge, which arranges visas, flights, insurance, initial group travel, initial accommodation, work placements, and provides ongoing support; publishers such as Lonely Planet; accommodation owners such as YHA; accommodation managers such as Sleeping With the Enemy, which oversees flat sharing among backpackers in Sydney; Internet cafes such as Global Gossip; entertainment venues such as The Coogee Bay Hotel, which shows soccer games from the English Premiership and hosts special parties on FA Cup night; recruitment agencies such as Recruitment Solutions; management companies such as Free Spirit, which packages salaries for contract workers living away from home; and much more besides. Unsurprisingly, my corporate interviewees foreground their own actions in explaining the relentless arrival of WHMs at Australia’s airports: the services they market and then provide make it easy to get there, to keep in touch with home, to find work and accommodation, and to experience much of what Australia has to offer, all at an affordable price.

Australia’s backpacker industry cannot be fully understood independently of broad economic change. First, broad but mundane economic change. None of my WHM interviewees claim to have given exchange rates much conscious consideration when planning their trip, but there is an interesting correlation between the average number of British WHMs residing in Australia through the late 1990s (under 16,000 1996-8, and almost 22,000 1999-2001) and the Australian Dollar’s recent fall in average value against the British Pound (only AU\$2.25 1996-8, and as much as AU\$2.61 1999-2001<sup>28</sup>).

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<sup>28</sup> Average values calculated using Federal Reserve Bank of New York figures.

Conversely, my backpacker industry interviewees often referred to macro-economics: to interest rates, as one important factor in the investment decisions of owners and operators; and to oil prices, of which airfares are in part an expression. And second, broad and extraordinary economic change; the kind of restructuring of which Harvey (1989) and others speak. The organisational shift towards transnational production and consumption aids the mobility of WHMs in numerous ways. Members of HSBC bank in the UK find that there are HSBC branches located across Australia (recent and continuing rural branch closures notwithstanding). Customers of Vodafone find that they can continue using their UK-purchased mobile phone in Australia, for an 'international roaming' charge. Employees of large firms, particularly in the banking and finance sector, find it is possible to work in Australia for a year without straying outside of their employer's internal labour market (see Beaverstock 1990 and 1994 on internal labour markets and temporary migration). Other workers find that, prior to departing the UK, they can register with a recruitment agency which is either represented in Australia (as with Manpower and Michael Page) or else allied to an Australian agency (as with Jocelyn Roe, allied to Recruitment Solutions, and Harris and Willis, allied to Morgan and Banks).

Mention of recruitment agencies brings me to a primarily economic theory currently popular in tourism studies, introduced in Chapter 2, and about which something must be said here in Chapter 5. Munt (1994) identifies 'Other postmodern tourists' – those contemporary tourists who, unlike post-tourists, shun simulacrum and use specialist agents and tour operators to arrange personalised or customised journeys 'off the beaten track', to reality, authenticity, uniqueness and other cultures – and asks of them the following question: are these Other postmodern tourists resisting mass tourism and post-tourism because of some oppositional and progressive postmodern nostalgia for the traditions, environments and travel styles of earlier times, or are they just involved in a middle class struggle to establish and maintain social differentiation? After Bourdieu (1984), he notes that classes struggle to distinguish themselves from each other by education, occupation, residence, and commodities, including experiences such as holidays. One class fraction identified in *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984) is the new petite bourgeoisie, low on economic capital, dependent on cultural capital or sign value to differentiate themselves. Munt argues that this class fraction undertakes Other

postmodern tourism to stoke-up on cultural capital, which then has an exchange value in the job market back home.

This paper of Munt's has been highly influential in tourism studies. Yet the argument has weak empirical foundations. Munt's research involves reading websites and brochures, and observing Other postmodern tourists from afar. He neither speaks to Other postmodern tourists, nor experiences Other postmodern tourism for himself. Of those commentators that do, opinion is divided. Using qualitative interviews, Desforges (1998) finds that British travellers to South America frame the 'Third World' as a place to be collected, and bring it back home as cultural capital with which to narrate new identities. Using similar techniques, however, May (1996b) finds that, for members of London's new cultural class, gender and life-cycle are as important as class fraction in shaping individual travel experiences. So what does my empirical material add to this debate? Of my 19 WHM interviewees, 10 were new-petit-bourgeois by Bourdieu's definition<sup>29</sup>. Of those 10, some were clearly serious about distinguishing themselves from others and building *curriculum vitae*. Victoria is a good example. Asked about her first trip to Australia in 1997, she says:

It was definitely a challenge, partly a thing to go on the CV. And as it turned out it was the crucial factor which probably got me my graduate position. Travelling experience and having done the unusual things in Australia definitely clinched the deal from that point of view [...]. If I was an employer I'd definitely like someone like me who's done something unusual, worked in roadhouses and sheep stations, really made an effort to travel around a bit. I wouldn't be so interested in the person who came out just for six months and spent six months working in a bar in Sydney and then spent three months pissing it away up and down the coast up to Cairns. That, no, it's not exactly a challenge.

Ciara is another good example. Asked if she thinks of herself as a typical WHM, she says "Yeah, but I like to get off the beaten track as well. Like, when I came here last week, I thought it's so touristy, so backpackery". On people who spend all 12 months of their working holiday in Sydney, she says "I don't think they're the real backpackers. Backpackers are the ones who go to all these other places and see the real Australia".

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<sup>29</sup> For the purposes of his own research, Bourdieu (1984) defines the new petite bourgeoisie by occupational classification. The class fraction includes social and medical services, cultural intermediaries, art craftsmen and dealers, and secretaries and junior commercial executives.

But others were clearly less serious about these things. When asked “Why Australia?”. Scott replies “Realistically, because it’s hot, and there was things to do like the Opera House, Ayers Rock”. When asked “What does travelling mean to you?”, he responds “Just a laugh. Just to relax for a year and meet people and just to enjoy the places you travel on the way really”. These are not the answers of someone seeking social distinction. To the question “You think it will be easy to get a job on your return?”, another WHM interviewee, Frank, replies “Yes, I think it will. I mean I finished my education. I have my papers, my diploma”. He still values educational qualifications. One more example. Of her return home, Katy says “I think I’ll have gone back and I’ll have done nothing constructive on my CV. I’ll have a big year’s gap where I’ve travelled. And I’ll have to make fruit picking and packing sound like a, you know, life changing, enhancing experience. It’s gonna be a challenge”. She makes no positive connection between her travels, cultural capital, and the labour market.

Why might this be the case, that, for new-petit-bourgeois WHMs, Munt’s theory works well in some cases but poorly in others? A seemingly obvious answer is that WHMs are not strictly Other postmodern travellers, in the sense that Munt and Desforges use the term. Australia is hardly ‘off the beaten track’. Over the last decade it has become a relatively easy and popular tourist destination. But this only raises another question: if Australia ranks poorly as an Other postmodern tourism destination, then what is the new petite bourgeoisie doing there in such numbers? There is an alternative answer to the first question. Munt is uncritical of Bourdieu. Yet, in addition to that which invites awe and admiration, there is much to criticise in *Distinction*.

Bourdieu sets out purposefully, to find “in the structure of the social classes the basis of the systems of classification which structure perception of the social world and designate the objects of aesthetic enjoyment” (ppxiii-xiv), to model “the relationships between the universe of economic and social conditions and the universe of lifestyles” (pxi). He finds what he is looking for, that social class and class fraction produce or govern cultural needs, through a mediating layer, the habitus, an acquired disposition of muscular patterns and bodily automatisms – taste is “social necessity made second nature” (p474). And he offers us three useful binaries. First, two broad categories of taste: elite or

bourgeois taste of the dominant (variously labelled pure taste, legitimate taste, the taste of liberty, the taste of luxury, rare taste, distinguished taste, high taste, and fine taste; characterised by detachment, difficulty, exclusivity, form and style over function and substance; conditioned by negative economic necessities); and mass or popular taste of the dominated (variously labelled barbarous taste, vulgar taste, low taste, coarse taste, crude taste; characterised by participation, ease, accessibility, sensuality; conditioned by positive economic necessities). Second, two modes of acquisition of elite taste: scholars, who acquire it relatively late in life through work and explicit learning; and gentlemen, who inherit it relatively early in life, through immersion in a world of cultivated people and practices, and thus express it with notable elegance. And third, two tastes of the dominant class: the taste of the dominant fractions of the dominant class (businessmen, the bourgeoisie), characterised by hedonism and ornament; and the taste of the dominated fractions of the dominant class (intellectuals and artists), characterised by asceticism and purity.

These binaries are useful, but they are founded on assumptions with which I am not entirely comfortable. Bourdieu positions his research subjects in three-dimensional social space by their volume of capital (material conditions of existence, position in the relations of production, social class); composition of capital (social origin and education level, class fraction); and the change in these two properties over time. He reduces gender, distribution in geographical space, age, ethnic origin, and marital status to less determinant subsidiary characteristics or governed secondary variables (governed by socio-occupational category). In addition, he writes (p163):

The dialectic of downclassing and upclassing which underlies a whole set of social processes presupposes and entails that all groups concerned run in the same direction, towards the same objectives, the same properties, those which are designated by the leading group [...]. This implies that the social order established at any moment is also necessarily a temporal order, an 'order of successions', as Leibniz puts it, each group having as its past the group immediately below and for its future the group immediately above (one sees the attraction of evolutionist models).

We are driven primarily and almost exclusively by our original and acquired material conditions of existence? We all run in the same direction, towards the same objective and properties, those of the leading group (rare goods and political power over the



distribution and redistribution of profit)? I doubt it, given the evidence presented by May (1996b), and given the evidence presented above, of WHMs, many of whom: fail to take travel as seriously as one might expect; privilege relaxation, laughter and enjoyment in their travel narratives; fail to recognise Bourdieu's crisis of overproduction in the field of academic qualifications; and make few positive connections between travel, cultural capital and the labour market.

I have two concluding points, or rather bridging points, to make about economics as a sphere of agency. First, like Thomas Cook, whose first excursion in July 1841 was a not-for-profit affair involving transfer by rail of Baptists and other signatories of the Temperance pledge from 'wet' Leicester to 'dry' Loughborough (Inglis 2000), not all my corporate interviewees are rational economic men. For example, Cathy Hanan, who edits *The Word: Backpacking Australia*, is something of a romantic (and clearly a woman). She identifies herself as "the type of traveller that likes to get away and off the beaten track", and says of her role at work "I really try and put a push on people who are a little bit more independent, will hitch a lift or, you know". For the backpacker industry, the pure financial return from independent travellers, hitching lifts, off the beaten track, is small. But for Cathy, the return is more than financial, it is political and cultural too. Second, after Smith (2001), I read the economy not as a thing, but as a social construct; an ongoing and contested project of practising people and the institutions they create (the nation-state, and later, among others, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisation). Laclau writes "Capitalism always has a constitutive outside [...], a framework of stable social and political relations" (1990, quoted in Smith 2001: 23). It is to this framework that I now turn.

### 5.3.2 Macro-politics

The economy has a constitutive outside. Australia's backpacker industry is heavily dependent on the decisions of politicians and civil servants; at the Australian Tourist Commission, which markets Australia as a backpacker destination (because individual companies refuse to invest in marketing which risks benefiting competitors in addition to themselves), and at DIMIA, which erected and administers the WHP, identified as central

to backpacking Australia by many of my WHM interviewees. When asked “Why Australia?”, Katy replies:

Because it's the easiest place to get a working holiday visa [...]. Australia wasn't my main destination. It's kind of in the middle of my round-the-world plan. So we thought we'd spend 6 or 7 months here. To be brutally honest, I was more interested in Thailand and Vietnam than I was about Australia.

When asked about work in Australia, Shirley says “I actually left with the intention of not working here. But I still wouldn't come out here without the working holiday visa as a safety net”.

Now sometimes nation-states act out of economic necessity. In the tradition of the Labor Government of Queensland, founded in 1899 to protect the jobs of sugar-cane workers from bonded Pacific islanders, all six Commonwealth Government of Australia reports on the WHP published through the 1990s have as their main focus economic impacts in general, and labour market effects in particular (see Dignam 1990, the National Population Council's Migration Committee 1991, Bell and Carr 1994, Murphy 1995, and the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration 1997). Officers at DIMIA regularly receive representations from the agriculture and tourism industries. And in interview, Olivia Shepherd, Officer (Tourism and Working Holiday Makers), identified domestic unemployment rates as “key” to the future direction of the WHP. But other times the nation-state acts under a different logic. We see this in the specific case of the WHP, the objectives of which remain ‘international understanding’ and ‘personal development’, despite recent public interest in WHMs as labourers and consumers. And we see it in the contextual case of Australia's wider immigration policy. While the Liberal-National Coalition Government, since coming to power in 1996, has actively grown the WHP, deactivating the cap imposed by the previous Labor Government, and pursuing new arrangements with non-arrangement countries, it has also determinedly restricted Australia's refugee programme, pegging intake at 12,000, the level inherited in 1996, apparently not for the often voiced, and often discredited, economic reason (immigrants take Australian jobs), but, in the spirit of those who rioted at Lambing Flat in 1861, fearful of opium and infection, and historian Geoffrey Blainey, fearful of foreign food and phlegm, for reasons of culture (the values of Afghanis and Iraqis are alien to

Australia), security (terrorists may use the programme to enter Australia), and health (asylum seekers may carry disease with them) (*Sydney Morning Herald* 26/01/02). The final point on nation-states and economic and other logics is that nation-states are not unified monoliths. Rather, they are made up of departments of individuals. Regarding the future of the WHP, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) would like it expanded to include all those countries with which Australia wishes to develop trade links, while DIMIA would like it restricted to only those people who pose no risk in terms of overstay (Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration 1997).

### 5.3.3 Cultural politics

After Smith (2001), my understanding of the world is that it is not only materially constructed by capitalists, politicians and civil servants, but also discursively constructed, particularly by people in what are increasingly being referred to as the cultural industries: writers, editors, publishers, photographers, film and show makers, critics and commentators. According to my interview transcripts, WHMs learn of Australia primarily from television. Katy says “I suppose Australia’s attractive ’cause on TV it seems laid back, it seems sunny, people seem to have a nice way of life”. When asked for specifics, she says:

*Neighbours* and *Home and Away*. That’s what you base your ideas of Australia on. Life is centred on the beach. Everyone seems to be tanned. Everyone seems to be relaxed. No one seems to be stressed. You know, everyone seems to be, no one seems to be poor and slumming it.

*Neighbours* was first screened in Britain in 1986. At its peak, it was the most popular television programme in Britain, with over 16 million viewers. In 2000, it finally dropped out of British television’s top 10<sup>30</sup>. WHMs are of the *Neighbours* generation. In Melbourne, popular attractions include the location at which *Neighbours* is filmed, and *Neighbours* trivia nights, at which WHMs get to meet and photograph actors from the series. (Many WHMs also visit Palm Beach, the North Sydney location of *Home and*

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<sup>30</sup> [www.neighbours.com](http://www.neighbours.com), accessed 05/05/02.

*Away*, a similar series, only slightly less successful than *Neighbours*, first screened in Britain in 1989).

Ruth says “There’s so many gorgeous pictures of Australia [...]. A lot of wildlife programmes, like Discovery Channel, and you see, you know, the Great Barrier Reef. And obviously the travel programmes”. But television teaches us much more besides what to feel about Australia, and, as holiday makers, we have many more teachers than just television. The holiday has a delicious cultural history (Inglis 2000). The sensibility of today’s holiday makers – our thoughts, passions, values, imaginings – is not primal. It has been formed, shaped, contrived, from the literal stories our parents and teachers tell us, and from the many lived, embodied narratives (biographies, social roles) society offers us. Inglis writes of ghosts from the past: early travellers such as Boswell, Byron and Conrad; Romantic poets such as Keats, Wordsworth and Coleridge; Romantic landscape painters such as Rosa, Claude and Turner. These heroes or exemplary lives give us our “favourite pictures of paradise” (p113). To them, for the purposes of my own study, I add those artists who taught European writers, photographers, film and show makers etc. to see the Australian Outback: Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder and Frederick McCubbin of the late nineteenth century Heidelberg School; and, of the twentieth century, Sydney Nolan, Russell Drysdale and Fred Williams.

#### *5.3.4 Micro-politics*

Add to capitalists, politicians, civil servants, and culture-makers (acting from above) ordinary people, who are active, creative, capable, and who, within more or less narrow margins, practice life materially, discursively, strategically, through family and friendship networks, from below (Smith 2001). Pretty much all of my WHM interviewees foreground their own characters in their telling of the WHP story. (Note that above, under my sub-heading ‘Economics’, corporate interviewees foreground their own characters too. And so the perspectives of political economy and ethnography tell different but complementary tales of agency). WHM narratives are diverse. Ruth expects “to learn, you know, that the whole world isn’t Sheffield”. Contrast this with Frank, for whom Australia is about “mountains [...], landscape [...], scenery [...], views”.

And again with Scott, who is “just here for a laugh”. Yes, these are common narrative tropes: travel for education, travel for nature, travel for fun. This we might expect, since we give form to or make sense of experience by working within society’s existing narratives (Inglis 2000). But individuality is also present in the transcripts. Ruth, who travelled to Australia with a gap year company, says “I chose Australia because there was a choice between sports camps, like with kids, horse places, like on a farm, and I’m interested in horses so”. Explanation? We don’t *simply* enter the narratives society offers us. Rather, we voluntarily, variously, selectively combine from the almost infinite stock, and inflect each one in our own way, to suit ourselves (Inglis 2000). In other words? We don’t simply consume true, literal, autonomous meaning. Rather, we engage in poetic activity: carrying our expectations, we wander or drift over reservoirs of fragments, selecting and combining, privileging or abandoning, using and making meaning (de Certeau 1984).

Other characters foregrounded by my WHM interviewees are family members and friends. Paul tells of a family friend he stayed with in Sydney:

The fact that when we found someone was there who was willing to help us out finding stuff and knowing what to take and, we had a face over there, really tipped the balance in our decision. Because we knew there was always something to fall back on if we had any trouble, which we didn’t at all, but I think it gave us just that added security to say right, let’s do it.

His experience, of Australian family or friends, is not uncommon. Recall Australia’s colonial history: convicts; free settlers; English-style parks of oak, beach, chestnut and elm; post-war assisted passages (10 Pound Poms). Victoria says of her sister “Her reason for coming out was that I’d done it and had a fantastic time”. Lisa tells of her WHM cousin from New Zealand, Phil, who visited her in England a couple of times before she left for Australia: “I think Phil being over here had an influence on me, because that really made me want to go. Every time I saw Phil and heard what he was doing and where he was going, that made me very, very unsettled and I wanted to go”. There is a debate within Australia’s backpacker industry at present labelled media versus word of mouth. The above WHM quotations, and many more like them, contribute to this debate. In the narratives of my WHM interviewees, both word of mouth and media are important,

but word of mouth wins out in terms of timing (friends and family are almost always mentioned prior to media) and weight (friends and family are almost always mentioned more frequently and fervently than media).

### 5.3.5 *Non-human actants*

So far, in structuring this chapter, for long periods I have clung to the hand of Smith (2001). At this point, however, I finally let go and proceed alone, or rather with others, seeking to move beyond the limits of Smith's humanistic or anthropocentric conceptualisation of agency. In *Transnational Urbanism*, technologies make only a few appearances, and then they are always coupled with Harvey's "reified" economy, and critiqued for their dependence on intent, motivated humans. Drawing on ideas primarily from science studies, I want to suggest that, since "Humans are defined by their use of tools: they are technical from their very origins as a species" (Amin and Thrift 2002, p78), we might better think of agency as an effect of alliances between human actors and non-human actants.

In 2001, my return flight from London to Sydney and back cost approximately £600. It took less than 20 hours. On arrival, I called home on a card charging four cents per minute, cheaper than a national call within Britain. My other options, almost as instantaneous and cheap, were to e-mail, fax or text message. It has not always been thus (Chambers 1999, except where indicated). In 1788, it took the First Fleet eight months to reach Australia. Forty-eight people died on route. In the 1840s, the White Star Line and the Black Ball Line between Liverpool and Melbourne took 80 days. In the 1860s, it still took over two months for mail to reach Britain from Australia. Concerned with efficiently managing its empire, the British government sponsored the Overland Telegraph Line, the last few miles of which were laid across Australia in 1872. In an instant, Britain and Australia became only hours away. The first direct radio message between Britain and Australia was sent in 1918. In 1919, two young brothers from Adelaide, Ross and Keith Smith, achieved the first Britain-Australia flight. It took 28 days. The first telephone call was made between Sydney and London in 1930. QANTAS, the Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service, was established by

Queensland pastoralists as a joy flight and air taxi service in 1920. In 1935, a ten-seat QANTAS Empire Airways passenger plane inaugurated the London-Sydney service. It took 13 days and involved 42 refuelling stops. In the early 1950s (recall anglophone Prime Minister Robert Menzies, and 'Populate or Perish' Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell), a return flight from Australia to London cost the same as a three-bedroom suburban home in Sydney. In the late 1950s, after QANTAS introduced Lockheed Super Constellation Airliners in 1954, it still cost the same as a new car. Most travellers chose the five-week cruise option (Bryson 2001).

The achievement of the working holiday rests heavily on things: passports, visas, jet engines, credit cards, telephones, the Internet, cameras, travel guides. The label backpacker is instructive. It describes a hunch-backed monster; a hybrid or trans-human entity combining person and backpack. Machines most commonly discussed by my WHM interviewees are telephones, computers, and their combination to achieve various outcomes: to keep them in touch with home, to make travel easier in an emotional sense. On telephones, Heidi says "I'm feeling really in touch when I phone the family, so it doesn't feel like that far away". And Shirley says:

Everyone has mobile phones these days. All my siblings have, and I can text them, you know, so it doesn't, you don't have to have a conversation to find out what's going on in their lives [...]. So I can keep in touch with them that's private from the conversations I have when I ring them, 'cause my mother and father are always in the background.

On e-mail, Al says "I think that may impact on, say 10 years ago when that wasn't around, it may actually feel like you're not so far away". And Ruth says "I e-mail [...]. It's just the little things you don't want to miss. Like the little things that are happening. The little bits of gossip that you need to like be caught up on". And on the Internet, Carl says "I can still visit the same places I used to visit everyday when I was at home [...]. It allows me to feel more connected to home [...]. It also makes me feel like I don't, I'm not disconnected being here". Every lunchtime, he visits the BBC website (like myself) and the Manchester City Football Club website: "things that are constant in your life when you live in the UK".

A final comment on these technologies of communication. Despite their productive application in contemporary capital accumulation, it seems that they arose to a large extent independently of economic logic. Recall that Castells (1996) attributes the technological revolution of the 1970s to a culture of individual freedom and innovation on campuses in the 1960s, and to the US Defense Department Advanced Research Projects Agency, within which the Internet was developed to prevent the destruction of US communications in the event of nuclear war. And Wolfe (2000), quirky yet convincing as ever, finds the origins of the computer as we know it in the biography of Bob Noyce (founder of Intel, arguably inventor of the microchip and Silicon Valley), a man from the religious West, who benefited from a number of coincidences and accidents, not to mention a great deal of space-race money.

Nature – bodies, environments, animals – comes last, but not least, in this section. Nature plays a prominent role in the narratives of my interviewees. I ask Katy “Why Australia?”. “Sunshine!” she almost shouts back. I ask the same of Scott: “realistically, because it’s hot”. Yes, nature is deeply constructed. Much of inland Australia, that iconic desert landscape, enjoyed lush periods of emu bush until 1859, when Thomas Austin, a landowner from Winchelsea, Victoria, imported 24 wild rabbits and released them for sport, after which they bred and ate like ... rabbits, advancing 75 miles a year, so that by 1880 two million acres of Victoria had been stripped, and livestock had been pushed into new areas at risk to overgrazing (Bryson 2001). Sociologists of scientific knowledge teach us that what counts as nature (data, artefacts) rests on social processes (argumentation and negotiation, deployment of rhetoric and discourse), emerges out of struggle between various actors (scientists, policy makers, the lay public). Actor-network theorists teach us that the categories culture, technology and nature are not discrete or unitary. Rather, they are distributed, interconnected, heterogeneous. They contribute to each other’s constitution. They emerge out of relations between each other.

Deeply constructed, but not determined or controlled. Donna Haraway (1992, cited in Michael 2000, p29) conceives of nature as ‘social nature’ (a relationship: the world is only natural when it exists for us), but also as ‘beyond’. Nature is not simply soft like the cities of Jonathan Raban (1974, cited in Inglis 2000). Rather, natural entities have



particular shapes, hard attributes, fixed features, which instruct us, imprint upon us, allow or forbid, discipline or enable. And so the happy holiday is one where a correspondence or balance is achieved between projection (the framing power of a sociable or conventional way of seeing or feeling i.e. our expectations, our desires) and experience (for the purposes of this argument, nature) (Inglis 2000).

## 5.4 Conclusion

How has it come to this, then, that on any one day we may find almost 50,000 WHMs working and holidaying in Australia? It seems that there is no single or even primary force for this mobility. There is no one WHM desire, not for pseudo-events, not for authenticity, and not for social distinction, though each of these desires is present to some or other degree in each WHM<sup>31</sup>. And there is no one structuring institution, not capitalism, though macro and micro economics constitute an important category of agency. Rather than this, there is a host of WHM desires and structuring institutions, created and sustained by the practices of individuals. Forces for the mobility of WHMs include players in Sydney's backpacker industry, none of whom are rational economic men; those responsible for setting interest rates and oil prices; officers at the Australian Tourist Commission and DIMIA, who are interested in labour markets but also social cohesion, national security and public health, often to different degrees, which means negotiation is important; makers of cultural products such as television shows; WHMs, who operate within society's existing narratives, but who never simply enter those narratives; WHM family members and friends; non-human actants (increasingly), such as information and communication technologies, with their roots in the economy, but equally in campus culture, national security, religion and chance, and bodies, environments and animals, some of which are constructed or soft, but some of which are beyond or hard. And what of the relationship between these forces for mobility? To the

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<sup>31</sup> WHMs do differ, of course, though significant differences seem to be age and nationality rather than class (or class fraction) and gender. Many young WHMs choose the security, sociability and value for money of large travel groups. By contrast, many older WHMs travel with long-term partners and considerable budgets. Many Dutch WHMs visit Jackaroo/Jillaroo schools, as mentioned in Chapter 1. As I understand it, this has less to do with any great need among Dutch WHMs to train as Australian cowboys, and more to do with one particular Dutch entrepreneur, who established one of these schools in rural New South Wales, and arranged to have it pushed by Travel Active, an influential Dutch travel agency.

language of depth (base, surface etc.), I prefer the language of people like Latour and Woolgar (1986), who hold that people and things – macro economic and sociological factors, the decisions and negotiations between multiple human actors, developments in equipments and instruments, accident and chance – come together in historically particular, horizontally arranged networks, or networks of networks. I prefer this approach because it best reflects the situation from my position as researcher, but also from the position of Carl as researched: “What I was saying about the circumstances, I dunno how to say it, but everything seemed to click and point to the same place. It so rarely happens, but everything seemed to be screaming you might as well do it [...]. Things just kept on adding up”.

I have one further point for this chapter – a crucial and thus rather lengthy point. While writing of forces for the mobility of WHMs, I wish to avoid giving the impression that contemporary transnational corporeal mobility is in any way unlimited, complete or expanding linearly, as some commentators risk doing (see my discussion of Appadurai 1996, Urry 2000 and Smith 2001 in Chapter 3). Each of the categories of agency used above is double-edged, and may be viewed as either a force for mobility, or a force for mobility’s apparent opposite: fixity. Take economics, for example. The present character of employment encourages both movement and stasis. Paul says of his decision to take a year out “It was quite a hard decision to make at the time. The pressure was kind of on with jobs. We wanted to get jobs straight out of university”. Al says “I’d done about 18 months of work after graduating, and I felt that if I didn’t do it then, I’d almost get trapped in a career situation where the benefits of going there would be outweighed by the costs of giving up a job and a career”. Describing the reaction of her fellow employees to her resignation, Lisa raises an important psychological force for fixity – security: “People at work just didn’t get it at all. They couldn’t understand why I’d leave a council job, which is supposed to be secure and quite easy, and go away and perhaps give up that security”. Finally, imagining his return to the Netherlands, Frank succinctly captures, and is captured by, the imagined triangle of fixity – job, house, family – haunting many WHMs: “I search for a new job. When I find a new job I’ll buy a house next to the new job. Before you know it, you have a house, a wife, children”. This haunting is complex. For some it is the haunting of children’s ghost stories: a fear

or dread. But for others, it is more a yearning or desire. Surprisingly, its character appears not to be gendered (might we expect more men to yearn for domestic bliss?). Importantly, this yearning provides a script to which some WHMs intend to perform on their return home. The claim here then, is that, contrary to its characterisation by Appadurai (1996), the imagination can work both ways, for mobility and for fixity. And contrary to its characterisation at times by Urry (2000) and Smith (2001), mobility is not all pervasive, but rather, viewed through the lens of the family, and of personal life strategies such as job searching and house buying, is more a privilege, of the young-free-and-single figure, with few bills to pay.

Now take macro-politics. In the specific case of Australia's WHP, John Howard's Liberal-National Coalition Government may have deactivated the cap imposed by the previous Labor Government (forever concerned about labour market effects), but, in the tradition of Australia's highly selective assisted passage programme, it retains a long list of conditions – applicants must be from agreement countries, must be between the ages of 18 and 30, must have no dependent children, must be likely to find work (the visa application form requests "resourceful, self-reliant, adaptable" individuals), must have no criminal convictions, must be of good physical and mental health, and must have approximately AU\$5000 in their bank account – which ensures that this particular path of travel is only open to relatively few people. In the contextual case of Australia's wider immigration policy, the Federal Government may be developing further what it calls Electronic Travel Authority or ETA (a system which enables travel visas to be granted to citizens of countries with ETA status quickly, cheaply, and easily, even via the Internet in some cases), but it also announced in its 2002 Budget AU\$77 million for Maritime Unit Surveillance, AU\$28 million for Coastwatch Air Surveillance, and AU\$13 million for a new radar system for Customs. Like the present character of employment, therefore, it seems that technologies of government work both ways, enabling mobility for some, enforcing fixity for others (the Asiatic Hordes, the Yellow Peril?).

My case for cultural politics is brief. Travellers draw on travellers' tales (Inglis 2000). Yet, in the shadows of these stories, there persist, not quite hidden, if much ignored of late, narratives of fixity (the public servant or the carer, for example), also to be drawn on

by WHMs and others, as “imaginative compost” (Spufford 1997, cited in Inglis 2000: 77). My case for micro-politics is less brief. On his return to England, Paul says of Australia: “I wouldn’t emigrate there at the moment, because I have, you know, all my family over here. And I couldn’t put distance between me and my family”. Lisa explains the lag-time between making her decision to go to Australia and leaving England in terms of being “attached” to her boyfriend, Declan. Boyfriends and girlfriends are regular and problematic features of WHM tales. Ruth endured discouragement from her boyfriend before leaving England, and then terminated their relationship upon arrival in Australia: “it’s too hard when you’re so far away”. Scott tells a similar story about his girlfriend. And in Young, NSW, I met a 55 year-old Dutchman who’d ridden his motorbike all the way from Amsterdam, and was heading for Sydney. “Why?”, I asked. “Because my wife left me and I am no longer tied”, he replied. I suggest above that we might conceptualise some of the forces for contemporary corporeal fixity as an imagined triangle: job, house, family. I want to suggest here that this triangle is for many an imagined stage in the life-cycle; that period which begins with a new job, a mortgage, a husband, wife or long-term partner, possibly continues with kids to be placed in schools, and ends with retirement, from work, and possibly from parenting (as kids finish school and move in to work or off to university). And there is a wider point here. In recent decades, time has been called on the extended family by some social scientists. But in the narratives of many WHMs, it survives near the centre, not as the disciplinary institution we long to escape and disrupt (commendably), but as a resource: “someone to fall back on” (Paul).

What of non-human actants? As regards information and communication technologies, even these seemingly pure forces for mobility have their other side; if not their face of fixity, then at least their mark of impurity. In science studies, much attention has been given to how technologies misbehave; how they disrupt the message between designer and user (see Michael 2000). This is a concern of my WHM interviewees. Of e-mail, Al says “I think also people can use e-mail too much. It can almost detract from the whole experience, because you are always contactable”. And Katy says “Maybe it’s better we haven’t had access to e-mail all the time, so I can’t constantly be e-mailing home to see what everyone’s doing, cause sometimes that just drives you mad, thinking about what

you're missing out on". And of telephones, Carl says "When you ring home and you feel, well, it's good to speak to your parents, friends, but you do get that sort of feeling afterwards and during the conversation: well I miss you and the fact that I've phoned you now actually makes me feel worse than I did before". These technologies, it seems, can make travel difficult as well as easy, both emotionally, in terms of homesickness, but also practically, in terms of achieving certain travel objectives (see the comments of Al above, and also Jenny Sinclair, a journalist with *The Sydney Morning Herald*, who writes "How can you find the real you when you're talking to your parents as much as you did at home?", 3/7/99, p12, IT section). The case of nature is not dissimilar: natural Australia can also misbehave. Bushfires blacken the Sydney sky. Surf carries deadly stingers and dumps on inexperienced swimmers. And, worst of all for my WHM interviewees, some days are overcast, cloudy, grey; some days it even rains! When asked about disappointments, Al says "We went out there with expectations of such great weather. When your plans are kind of thwarted by weather, like for example it rained quite a lot in Sydney while we were there, particularly at the weekends, and that was quite frustrating". And Leah says "I thought it was going to be sunny all the time, from September to March".

A conclusion to this final point then. I set out for Australia, inspired by the writings of John Urry and others, in search of mobility. And I found it, in fascinating abundance: travelling bodies in aeroplanes, buses and campervans; travelling objects in rucksacks and parcels; travelling information in e-mails and web-pages. But I also found examples of relative, contingent fixity, by which, explicitly, I *do not* mean absolute fixity – the idea, so rightly critiqued by many (Appadurai 1996, Urry 2000, Smith 2001, Amin and Thrift 2002), that we live in bounded, static communities. Clearly, communities are "now routinely distanced" (Amin and Thrift 2002: 64), spatially open, cross-cut by mobilities or flows. And clearly, communities are always in process, coming, unfolding. But what I *do* mean, is that, at the present moment, mobility is not unlimited, complete, and nor is it ever-expanding, linearly. Searching for mobility, I found persistent pockets of lesser and slower mobility (Lisa's fellow Local Authority employees, for example); numerous forces fixing bodies in space and, less effectively, time (DIMIA – its legislation and surveillance technologies – for example); and enduring yearnings, for

proximate family and secure careers (that imagined triangle or life-cycle stage of job, house and family), of subjects intent on acting them out.

And a conclusion to this chapter. Contemporary transnational corporeal mobility is not all pervasive. But, on any one day, we may find almost 50,000 WHMs working and holidaying in Australia. Why? Because things have accumulated and come to a head – the self-interest of capitalists in Sydney's backpacker industry, broad economic restructuring, Australian immigration policy (informed by Colonial, White and Multicultural Australia), cultural products such as *Neighbours*, diverse WHM biographies, distanciated families (Colonial Australia again), transport and communications technologies – making a working holiday both desirable and easily achievable or doable. I now turn to another question: what are the implications of such working holidays for their makers? After all, we can assume it would not have come to this, had early WHMs got nothing out of it.

## CHAPTER 6: MOBILITY AND SELF-IDENTITY<sup>32</sup>

### 6.1 Introduction

What are the implications of such working holidays for their makers? My corporate interviewees have thoughts on this. Julian Ledger of YHA NSW worries that backpackers no longer mix with local Australians and so fail to have as “intense” or “meaningful” a travelling experience as they might. He fears that Australia has become too safe and easy: “I worry a bit that if we become too much of a soft destination the next generation are gonna say ‘Ah God, look at Australia, that’s where mum went man, that’s really dull. I’m going to Eastern Siberia’ or the next destination”. Alan Collingwood of Travellers Contact Point worries that, since five or so years ago, backpackers spend their time in backpacker pubs and night-clubs at the expense of “a true travel experience”. He says “I think it’s sad in some ways because they’re being shoved and pushed into certain areas and just mixing with each other without actually mixing with Australians”. I listened to many variations on this theme. James Parker of TNT Magazine identifies “a discussion point in the industry” which he frames as a series of statements and questions:

They jump off. They get on a backpacker bus. They go to a backpacker hostel. They get picked up for a backpacker tour. They drink in backpacker pubs. Is the whole thing becoming so packaged that, and what’s gonna be the effect of that? [...] Are they independent travellers in name only? [...] Is it really a package tour, described as independent travellers? [...] To me the interesting one is, is Australia becoming too safe as a destination? Is it still challenging enough?

Similarly, Mark Williams of The Word asks “how free are the Free Independent Travellers?”. It is worth noting that these Chief Executive Officers and General Managers do have a more sophisticated understanding of their market than these quotations suggest. They acknowledge that there must be backpackers with which the industry has little contact, of which the industry has little knowledge. Hartmut Finke of Sydney Central YHA speaks of a spectrum ranging from “the vomit backpacker who comes here to get drunk and to get laid” to “the very conscientious, casually minded,

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<sup>32</sup> A version of this chapter was submitted for publication under the title ‘Free Independent Travellers? British Working Holiday Makers in Australia’. It has been accepted with revisions by the Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.

slightly more refined, probably elder person, who really wants to explore the country". And they disagree among themselves, talking tentatively of theories, opinions and discussion points as opposed to conclusive research findings or consensus. Still, such talk is usually concluded something like this: "The trend's definitely towards mass tourism. The Free Independent Traveller, I think they are a dying breed" (Hartmut Finke, Sydney Central YHA).

This binary, of yesterday's difficult, dangerous, challenging travel, undertaken by independent, refined, conscientious explorers, productive of intense, meaningful, true experiences, and today's easy, safe, soft tourism, packaged and sold to the masses, productive of serious drinking and casual sex – this narrative of loss – is by no means new or limited to the business growth concerns of Sydney's backpacker industry. We find it in both the British and Australian press. Some journalists bemoan recent developments in backpacker practices. Recall the quotation from Jenny Sinclair (presented above in Chapter 5): "How can you find the real you when you're talking to your parents as much as you did at home?" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 03/07/99, p12). Others just bemoan backpackers themselves, "the lowest members of the tourist foodchain" (Anthony Lawes, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 01/06/98, p10):

Of all the natural laws, surely the most immutable are those relating to backpackers: thou shalt live in a house with 15 others; be oblivious to (or simply not worried by) the level of squalor in which you live; drink the local beer to excess at every possible moment.

And we find this narrative of loss in two classic texts of the tourism literature. Boorstin (1964) holds that our increased foreign travel has made little difference in our thinking and feeling, that we are not noticeably more cosmopolitan or more understanding of other peoples. He explains this in terms of "the lost art of travel" (p77) and "the decline of the traveller and the rise of the tourist" (pp84-5): the travel experience has been transformed from something uncomfortable, difficult, expensive, active, and athletic, to something passive, safe, cheap, available, antiseptic, pleasant, and relaxing. MacCannell (1976) views tourists as residents of unstable, discontinuous, inauthentic modernity, searching for reality, meaning and authenticity in other cultures and historical periods. He holds



that this search is increasingly futile, since other cultures cope with and profit from the intrusions of tourists by creating front and backstages.

There are other positions in the tourism literature, of course (see Chapter 2). Crouch (1999) chooses to emphasise some positive outcomes of tourism: knowledge, transformation, empowerment, friendships, built identities, refigured selves. He suggests that we rethink the tourist from consumer to active, creative, expressive, imaginative human being, acknowledging that human beings are socialised, but insisting that they are also free, since they become more reflexive with time, and many tourist sites remain 'loose', affording informal play and self-organisation. Löfgren (1999) echoes these sentiments: tourists are unique, capable and diverse human beings, not standard and passive consumers. So does Inglis (2000), who celebrates holidays for the happiness, fulfillment and satisfaction they give us, for the moral and political goods which come from mingling, because on holiday we compare other lives, make new friends, and learn new stories.

Most recently, Franklin (2003) insists that tourism is neither destructive, damaging and unsustainable, nor simplistic, decorative and insignificant. Rather, it is one means by which individuals seriously and passionately engage with the fluid conditions of modernity. It is a central means of identity formation. It is transformative and redemptive. It encourages cosmopolitan and metropolitan identities. And it is productive of knowledge of and attachments to nature. Franklin explains the 'how' of this last point convincingly (see above – p51). For other mechanisms, however, regarding Franklin's point about identity formation in particular, we must look elsewhere. Drawing on Giddens' analysis of modern self-identity (Giddens 1990, 1991), Desforges (2000) notes that self-identities are no longer firmly structured in advance by social hierarchies and traditional authorities, so individuals face a diversity of possible selves, and must maintain a sense of continuity reflexively through biography. He notes that identities are not static, organic, to be discovered. They are fluid and flexible. They are actively constructed through practices, including tourist practices. Desforges identifies two key moments at which travel is most useful to self-identity: the decision to travel (often made at moments of change, such as divorce or retirement, when self-identity is open to

question – Giddens calls these fateful moments); and the homecoming (when experiences are worked-up into stories for use in the performance of new self-identities to others). Elsrud (2001) builds on this work of Desforges. She examines travel narratives of risk and adventure, and finds that their construction rests on the dominant grand narrative of the white, male, colonial explorer, and the consumption of mythologised experiences, places, food, medicine and clothing. She also finds that their deployment may be gendered, since the reflexive life project of late modernity is open to all, but adventure is an historically founded masculine practice.

So what can my research contribute here? How free and independent are Free Independent Travellers? In what ways, if any, are their travel experiences intense, meaningful, true? Has Australia become a soft destination, too safe, too easy? Do backpackers in Australia mix with local Australians? Or, more specifically, what do WHMs get out of their working holiday? What does it do for them? Does it broaden their minds? Does it produce international understanding? If so, how? After all, recall that the objectives of Australia's WHP read as follows: "The working holiday programme aims *to promote international understanding*. It provides opportunities for resourceful, self-reliant and adaptable young people to holiday in Australia and to supplement their funds through incidental employment" (Visa application form 1150, my italics).

## **6.2 An economic story**

It would seem that the narrative of loss introduced at the top of this chapter is founded on some substance. Today, WHMs act within many constraining structures, the most important of which, ironically, is Australia's backpacker industry. Recall that core and peripheral constituents of this industry include airlines, travel agents, tour operators, publishers, accommodation owners and managers, Internet cafes, entertainment venues, recruitment agencies, management companies, and gap year companies, such as Gap Challenge, of which Ruth, one of my WHM interviewees, says (straight-faced, with no pun intended) "It was a gap year company called Gap Challenge. And they basically arranged the whole thing for us. We flew out with Emirates. So they basically sorted the whole thing out, so it wasn't really a challenge"!

In recent years, watch-words for this industry have been competition and professionalisation. Why? In part, because of the neoliberal context in which it operates. Deregulation of air travel produced confused effects in Australia, from the rise of Virgin Blue to the collapse of Ansett. Long-term, the outcome is likely to be cheaper flights between popular airports, and attractive opportunities for WHMs to fly between the major tourist sites (Sydney, Uluru/Ayers Rock, Cairns), and over the spaces in-between. Deregulation of the insurance industry is also a subject of some debate in Australia. Lawyers tell a story of increased competition among insurance sellers, price wars and a race to the bottom through the 1990s, crisis at the turn of the century and massive premium hikes in the last few years. Insurance sellers tell a different story of ambulance chasing lawyers and the emergence of a compensation culture. Either way, the result is the same: small businesses suffer, such as that of Colin Skinner, who sold his 27-bed backpacker hostel and whitewater rafting business after 12 years when faced with premium hikes of over 300% (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26/01/02).

There is another context, specific to the backpacker industry, which is also important here. What has become known as Childers (the arson attack on a hostel in Childers, Queensland, which killed fifteen backpackers from six countries in June 2000) is a factor in this insurance crisis. It is also a factor in the strict control of smoking many hostels now maintain – previously, smoking was an important technology of sociability for WHMs (see Chapter 7). While Childers encouraged professionalisation and attention to standards in particular, another industry-specific development encouraged competition. Recall that, through the 1990s, the Bureau of Tourism Research (BTR) used data from the International Visitor Survey to describe the backpacker market (see Haigh 1995 and Buchanan and Rossetto 1997). The operational definition used was anyone who spends at least one night in a backpackers hotel or youth hostel. Such a large net was always going to catch students and other kinds of tourist and thus overestimate the size of the market. But since the industry desired the support inflated numbers gave it, in negotiations with the Australian Tourist Commission over funding for example, the BTR figures were welcomed. That is, until recently, when investors began showing an interest in this seemingly large market, leading to fears of increased competition and over-supply.

The BTR and the backpacker industry are currently in discussion regarding a new operational definition. In addition to its role in the argument of this section – that the travelling practices of British WHMs in Australia have become in many ways increasingly constrained over the last decade or so – this story of operational definitions and market sizes is a wonderful example of the social construction of a scientific fact by interested parties.

The result of these developments, professionalisation and increased competition, is that Australia's backpacker industry is increasingly dominated by large companies, usually held by even larger investment companies, interested in such production techniques as standardisation wherever possible. Julian Ledger of YHA NSW estimates that it now costs over AU\$30,000 per bed to open a hostel, a large proportion of which goes to consultants: architects, town planners, project managers, structural, mechanical and electrical engineers, acoustic, heritage and landscape experts. Companies increasingly operate in strategic alliances. Many hostels in Sydney run 'backpacker information nights' which double-up as marketing opportunities for tour operators such as Oz Experience. In this way, WHMs may be passed from one company to the next, around Australia, from arrival to departure. One of the biggest players in all of this is STA Travel. STA was born out of the Australian Union of Students in 1971. It was originally known as AUS Student Travel. Until the mid 1970s it chartered planes and arranged overseas trips for union members. With the oil crisis, ownership passed to the trading conglomerate Edward Keller Holding Ltd of Zurich. Today, the Diethelm Keller Group (in June 2000 Edward Keller merged with Diethelm and Co) has 15,000 employees and a turnover of US\$3.5 billion. Interests include travel, healthcare, household appliances, cleaning, engineering and many kinds of manufacturing. In addition to AUS Student Travel, the travel interest (STA Travel) now controls many student travel organisations, including USIT, originally born out of the Irish Union of Students. And STA is not the only large company interested in backpackers. Hotel conglomerate Accor, owner of Mercure, Novotel and Ibis, known for reliability and predictability, will shortly open three hostels in New Zealand, and has expressed an interest in the Australian market (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 03/06/02).

The case which best illustrates my point here is YHA NSW (Youth Hostel Association New South Wales). The history of youth hostels dates back to a variety of movements centred on youth, walking and nature in late nineteenth and early twentieth century northern Europe, and particularly to 1909, when a German school teacher, Richard Schirrmann, arranged walking tours for pupils through the hill country bordering the Rhine using schools along the route as accommodation (Coburn 1950). Schirrmann opened his first purpose built hostel (or at least converted, from a small castle, Burg Altena) in 1910. Founding principles were education, health, sun, fresh air and nature; a reaction to the dirty, over-crowded, poorly ventilated industrial towns of the Rhur. The movement grew and, with time, further principles were added, of environmental conservation, personal development, friendship and understanding of others and the world (through the mixing up of different young people in one place). By 1932, when the first meeting of the International Youth Hostel Federation was held in Amsterdam, 2,123 youth hostels were in operation. Today, the global figures are 4,500 hostels in 60 countries.

YHA NSW was formed in 1943 and today operates 40 hostels. In the words of Julian Ledger, Chief Executive Officer, "The philosophy of the organisation has been to encourage travellers to approach their trips as being open-ended and free-spirited. Travel should become a journey of exploration, education and self-development". Sounds familiar, but much has changed in recent years at YHA NSW. Hostels have become bigger, with more twin rooms and *en suite* bathrooms (and fewer opportunities for different people to mix). Sydney Central YHA opened in 1996 with 570 beds, a travel agency, information desk, bar, shop, swimming pool, sauna, games room, cinema, book exchange, kitchens, laundries, public telephones, barbecues, and a general manager, Hartmut Finke, whose prior experience was in 5-star hotels. There are many reasons for these developments. After Childers, standards in terms of cleanliness and security are important, and rightly so. The ageing of WHMs (the upper age limit was originally 26 years) and the strong Pound mean that British backpackers can afford more comforts if they choose. But competition as a coercive force seems to be key. Julian Ledger points to youth hostel associations in northern Europe, the markets of which contain more families and school groups, the nature of which is more charitable, evident in their

relationships with government. He then describes the situation in Australia, where government support is virtually non-existent, the backpacker industry is mature, and economic realities are relatively harsh:

We cross-subsidise a lot of very small country facilities from the city. Now you can't do that when someone sets up next door in the city and charges a dollar less. So we have had to rationalise and, rather than providing what the committee thinks ought to be provided, you become entirely market-driven.

This and other cases raise the following question: are these many developments which together conspire to make travelling in Australia easy and comfortable demand-led or supply-led? In the above discussion, I privilege supply, but things have happened on the demand side too: today's WHMs have grown up with ATM machines and mobile phones, for example. So the simple answer is both. But the simple answer gives us more questions. Are both sides equally active? If not, is one dominant? Drawing on seemingly rigorous market research, James Parker of TNT Magazine suggests that most backpackers were always fairly happy before these changes. Rightly or wrongly, they believed arson or abduction would never happen to them, and they enjoyed roughing it, at least a little bit, especially if that meant they could smoke cannabis in their dorms. If we accept this, just for the moment, and focus on supply, we can write this story of competition, creation of needs and concentration of ownership in the language of Marxist political economy. Theorising the property development cycle, Harvey wrote (1978, 102):

In the realm of exchange each capitalist operates in a world of individualism, freedom and equality and can and must act spontaneously and creatively. Through competition, however, the inherent laws of capitalist production are asserted as 'external coercive laws having power over every individual capitalist'. A world of individuality and freedom on the surface conceals a world of conformity and coercion underneath. But the transition from individual action to behaviour according to class norms is neither complete nor perfect – it never can be because the process of exchange under capitalist rules always assumes individuality while the law of value always asserts itself in social terms. As a consequence, individual capitalists, each acting in their own immediate self-interest, can produce an aggregate result which is wholly antagonistic to their collective class interest.

As for property development, so for the subject of this section. Individual capitalists (Chief Executive Officers and General Managers in Sydney's backpacker industry), each acting in their own immediate self-interest (by bettering their neighbour's offer with *en*

*suite* bathrooms and minibus pickups from the bus station), can produce an aggregate result (travel in Australia becomes easy and comfortable) which is wholly antagonistic to their collective class interest (Australia becomes a ‘soft destination’ and backpackers look elsewhere for ‘intense experiences’).

### 6.3 Not just an economic story

What if we focus elsewhere though, on the demand side, or on other constraining structures, other than Australia’s backpacker industry? Before I left for Australia, and again on my return, I had many conversations with *family and friends in England* about my work, travelling and Australia. Such conversations are enabling in many ways. But they may also be framed as constraining. One WHM called Al told me:

There is a kind of pressure that you feel you should go to certain places and locations, otherwise you haven’t seen the real Australia. As my friend kind of put it, ‘ticking the boxes’. You’ve gotta go to Ayers Rock. You’ve gotta go to Sydney. You’ve gotta go to the Barrier Reef [...]. It’s kind of like if you don’t go to those and you go home and people say ‘you went all the way to Australia and you didn’t see Ayers Rock’.

Because of conversations in England, he felt under pressure to visit certain sites and not others – to ‘do’ Australia. On arrival in Australia, I was met at the airport by some old friends from university, on whose floor I spent my first two jet-lagged weeks in Sydney. In-between work and sleep, they showed me their own version of Sydney. I liked what I saw and rented a flat down the road, shamelessly adopting their friends and friendly places. Again, this is a common experience. Just under half my WHM interviewees left Europe in the knowledge they had *family and friends in Australia*. I had the following conversation with Tracey:

N: How come you first moved to Coogee?

T: Just because we, when we first arrived in Sydney, we met up with some friends from home who were already living here.

N: And do you know why they had first moved to Sydney?

T: Yeah, because they had met some friends they knew from home.

Even of those who don’t follow in the footsteps of others like Tracey and myself, many fail to escape the physical presence of family and friends, because increasingly family

and friends visit Australia during the visa year, especially around Christmas time, or else WHMs travel for the entire year with sisters or boyfriends or workmates anyway (again, almost half my interviewees): *family and friends in England in Australia*. Amanda, for example, settled in Sydney for Christmas because her mum was coming to visit, and told me “I don’t think we’ve had more than three weeks without seeing someone we know from the UK”.

Old friends are not the only friends who structure the ideas and practices of WHMs. New friends are also important. In Sydney’s pubs, hostels and apartments, WHMs tell each other stories, often illustrated by photographs. Touring Australia is what they have in common. They recommend certain places and hostels. “They tell you where not to go, almost more important than where to go” (Joanne). Shirley says:

There was actually one stage there when I was going down the east coast, I actually didn’t open my *Lonely Planet* for about 10 days because I just went with the flow. You know what the next thing is to do. It’s just word of mouth. And the common thread with all backpackers is where’ve you been and where’re you going next.

By implication, outside of these 10 days Shirley did open her *Lonely Planet* almost daily. *Lonely Planet* and other guidebooks link word of mouth to the backpacker industry. They institutionalise word of mouth. Some WHMs buy their guidebooks months before leaving for Australia and read them cover to cover. Ruth says “I read up about a place before I go. And mostly I read, read the places to stay and the good areas and everything”. Tracey says “we would read up on all the places and sort of decide which places we wanted to visit”. Hutnyk (1996: 63) describes guidebooks to India as machines through which traveller experience in India is produced. Drawing on Heidegger’s observation that technologies of representation enframe, bring one particular world into presence and not another, he suggests that we experience places through conditioning apparatus: voice (word of mouth), writing (guidebooks and magazines) and pictures (photographs, television programmes, films). Tourist guides are cultural mediators. They make us selectively aware, attentive at places marked as of interest, oblivious at other times (Cohen 1972). Barthes (1972) labelled the Blue Guide to Spain “an agent of blindness” (p76). A product of bourgeois and puritan morality, it inscribes men as ‘types’ (the Basque as an adventurous sailor), Republicans as extremists, Nationalists as



heroic liberators, and Catholicism as churches with glorious spires (as opposed to “a barbaric force which has stupidly defaced the earlier achievements of Muslim civilisation”, p75). It promotes mountains and monuments, and in doing so suppresses the reality of present day Spain and its people.

Other travel aids which filter and channel experience include backpacker magazines and cameras. *TNT Magazine* and *The Word* inhabit the space between WHM word of mouth and guidebooks such as *Lonely Planet*. They prosper because by the time guidebooks reach the shops in many ways they are already out of date. And they structure backpacker experience in similar ways to guidebooks. Many of my WHM interviewees never knew that they were backpackers before reading these magazines. In their pages, full of stories, photographs and advertisements, WHMs may find themselves a community, an identity, and a script for performing both. As for cameras, Urry (1990) writes that they give shape to travel: we move purposefully from view to view. Such views are cultured: we search out landscapes free from visual pollution, consistent with contemporary images of nature, touched by local particularity (Urry 1995). Once found, we capture these views, return home and display them to others, thus reinforcing their dominance (Crawshaw and Urry 1997).

#### **6.4 Overestimating working holiday makers**

To rehearse the argument of this chapter so far, concerns that today’s WHMs fail to achieve personal development or acquire international understanding through travel because backpacking in Australia has become too easy are founded on some substance. WHM practices are highly structured by the backpacker industry, family and friends, and technologies of representation. But is this the full story? In what is left of this chapter, I suggest that the above position risks simultaneously over- and underestimating WHMs. To do so, I consider the ‘whether’ and ‘how’ questions of personal development and international understanding in more detail, and I engage with the other side of structure: agency.

Backpacking in Australia has become too easy. This statement is founded on the assumption that people backpack Australia for the challenge. Among WHMs, I found this not always to be the case. For many interviewees, this working holiday was their first big trip abroad, so it was important that the destination be safe, English-speaking, free from stress. Amanda says “Maybe I’m just not a big risk taker. I don’t know. And I knew how easy it was to travel to Australia. And I don’t speak any other language so English is a big help”. I asked Katy “Why Australia?”. She replied “Because it’s English speaking, you don’t have to make an effort, you come here, it’s all easy [...]. It’s so similar it’s not even a challenge, just nicer and sunnier and friendlier and cheaper”.

For others, it would seem that a 12-month trip to Australia remains a challenge, and this is important to them. Before she left, Ciara thought “It’s so far away, I couldn’t do it. A year away from home, and it just seemed like ‘Oh my God!’”. Heidi describes Australia as “exotic” and says “going to the other side of the world, it just sounds like such a big step to do it”. There are two main reasons why a year in Australia might still be considered a challenge. First, Australia is a vast continent thousands of miles from Europe in which, on occasion, WHMs come unstuck. Consider the following headlines taken from British newspapers:

Dangers of the wild blue yonder (*The Telegraph*, 25/06/00, reporting on the Childers fire).

Briton killed after waterfall plunge (*The Times*, 10/12/00, reporting on an accident in the Blue Mountains involving British WHM Paul Marshall).

Dingoes attack British backpackers days after boy mauled to death (*The Guardian*, 06/05/01, reporting on a dingo attack on Fraser Island).

Danger in travellers’ paradise (*The Times*, 16/07/01, reporting on three events: the arson of the Downunder Hostel in Kings Cross, Sydney, which killed six backpackers in 1989; the abduction and murder of seven backpackers hitchhiking the Hume Highway between 1989 and 1992; and the Childers fire).

Desert dangers: empty, hot and predictable (*The Guardian*, 16/07/01, reporting on the disappearance of British WHM Peter Falconio while driving the Stuart Highway with his girlfriend).

A million square miles of mystery (*The Times*, 18/07/01, reporting on the Peter Falconio story).

A perfect place to hide – and kill (*The Independent*, 22/07/01, reporting on the Peter Falconio story).

Search for killer in a wilderness of desperadoes (*The Telegraph*, 01/08/01, reporting on the Peter Falconio story).

British backpacker dies in outback crash (*The Telegraph*, 01/08/01, reporting on a minibus crash in Queensland in which two backpackers were killed, one British, one Japanese).

Second, travelling anywhere is a challenge for some people. A few of my interviewees knew little if anything of backpacking or Australia. Kyra, for example, lacked confidence in her ability from the very beginning. She paid STA Travel £90 to help with her visa application. Of her arrival in Australia she says “I didn’t research it at all. Nobody had mentioned anything. I just dumped myself here and that was it [...]. I didn’t have a clue. I was at a complete loss”.

Those WHMs for whom 12 months in Australia is a challenge return home proud and fulfilled, with good stories, with strong narratives. What does this mean though, to have a strong narrative, and why is it important? In *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991), Giddens makes the following argument, at the centre of which are strong narratives. First, he identifies three structuring institutions of globalising modernity: the separation of time and space (time and space were linked through place until an empty measure of time was developed: the mechanical clock); the disembedding of social institutions, or the lifting out of social relations from local contexts through disembedding mechanisms (abstract systems, made up of symbolic tokens such as money and expert systems); and reflexivity (the susceptibility of social activity to revision in the light of new information or knowledge). He then draws out their implications for mechanisms of self-identity. In our post-traditional order, where lineage, gender, social status etc. are no longer as fixed or relevant, and lifespans are no longer ritualised passages, self-identity is no longer just a given, but becomes a matter of choice, a reflexively organised endeavour, a project or active intervention, involving the sustaining or living of coherent yet continuously revised biographical narratives, autobiographies (interpretative self-histories), stories about the self, about where we have come from and where we are going.

Two elements of Giddens theory are particularly relevant to the discussion in this paper. First, he identifies *fateful moments*, crossroads in life (marriage or divorce, examination,

moving house or job) which offer us negatives (they threaten ontological security) but also positives (they make possible the display of daring, resourcefulness, skill, endeavour, commitment; they are moments of reskilling or empowerment) (see Desforges 2000). Second, he notes that, living in a climate of risk, which also has its dark side, *we sometimes embrace risk for its psychological rewards*: feelings of thrill and elation, demonstrations of bravado and mastery (see Elsrud 2001). Given this context, maybe we should take the claims of WHMs – that they return home open-eyed, open-minded, grown-up, laid-back, chilled-out, easy-going, confident, experienced, tolerant, courageous, independent – a little more seriously. If self-development is not so much possible as continuous, then the question becomes not whether but how WHMs achieve self-development through travel. Fateful moments and risk seem important here. While backpacking in Australia is indeed easy, particularly in relation to travel in countries such as India or even Australia 15 years ago, a 12-month working holiday to Australia still carries numerous risks and, for some, involves enormous upheaval. Homes and even businesses may be sold or rented out. Careers may be broken. Partners may be left (in confusion). Habits and routines are most certainly disrupted. New people and places are most certainly encountered. As a result, the working holiday becomes an opportunity for reskilling, and for the display or demonstration of certain qualities, to WHMs themselves and to others. Amanda says “I was the kind of person who said ‘I can’t do that, I can’t do that’. But now I think you can do anything you wanna do if you just do it”. On fruit-picking, Shirley says “It’s about the challenge. It’s about being told this is the shittiest job you can do. But I can do it”. Travelling with friends, Scott has learnt “how to act around other people, that you’re not the centre of attention, just one of the group”. Like Scott, Ruth has become “better at meeting people and talking to people”. Learning to cope with change or uncertainty, to be patient with and tolerant of others, gaining confidence and a sense of control, these are strong themes in my interview transcripts.

There are three further means by which self-development is achieved through working holidays. The first relates to space. Ruth claims she can explore her potential in Australia in a way she couldn’t in England:

At home, especially at school, you're put into a category and you have, you stay in that. And at school there's some horrible, like, some not very nice people, who can, like, knock your confidence. And so I'd say I'm a bit more confident now cause you can just be who you like, and if the people don't like you then that's OK cause you're just gonna move on. If they don't like you at home then your life is hell.

She touches on two things. Despite e-mail, visits from mum, Australian relatives etc., moving to the other side of the world still allows us to put meaningful distance between ourselves and home. In turn, this means that relationships between WHMs are to a large extent baggage-free: "It's all about where you're going and where you've come from, rather than what you did at home or how much you earned or that kind of thing" (Katy). This is liminality as described by Shields (1991): in places on the margin, we experience loss of social co-ordinates, liberation from the regimes of normative practices and performance codes of mundane life, freedom from restraint. The second further means relates to time. Writing on academic life, Massey (2002) recently commented on a general condition of fragmentation and immediacy, in which we lack time to think, to ponder, to chew things over, to question, to re-work, to get down to something big, long-term, strategic. WHMs characterise life back in Britain as speedy and stressful. They welcome the change of pace a working holiday in Australia offers them. Carl has time "to unwind and put things back together again" ("I hadn't had more than a week off in five or six years. I was exhausted"). Amanda has time "to relax, rest, reprioritise, redress the balance" (back in Britain, she often worked 14-hour days). Kyra has time "to get my head together". Getting one's head together may require more than head-work. My third means by which WHMs achieve self-development is inscription. Having freed themselves from home, WHMs reskill, display and demonstrate certain qualities, take time to reflect, and order these reflections, preserve them, prepare them for further display through inscription. Lisa keeps a diary while travelling because "you've got so much time to think about things". She uses it "to put meaning and order" to people, places and experiences. Other than diaries, we sort our lives into narrative form by filling albums with photographs, CVs with skills and experiences, passports with stamps – Munt (1994: 112) labels the passport "a record of achievement".

## 6.5 Underestimating working holiday makers

Recall from Chapter 5 that I reject Munt's (1994) theory of 'Other postmodern tourists', based on Bourdieu's (1984) social critique of the judgement of taste, because I don't recognise my active, capable, reflexive research subjects in either text. When we think of agency, we often turn to de Certeau (1984). In essays on reading, walking, talking and cooking, de Certeau argues that we are not passive consumers of dominant production or true, literal, autonomous meaning. We are not disciplined in the Foucauldian sense by coherent, silent, opaque panoptican procedures. Rather, without explicitly challenging or rejecting repressive strategies, we use or produce them again, we manipulate and appropriate them. In our walking we drift and wander, we inhabit or actualise space. In our reading we privilege and abandon, we select fragments and compose. All these tactics, this poetic activity, we employ deviously, subtlety, joyfully to get along or make do in the constraining space of others.

The argument has moved on. In the narrative of loss introduced at the top of this chapter, we not only risk overestimating WHMs, as serious and capable subjects travelling to be challenged. We also risk underestimating them, as passive consumers of dominant production and autonomous meaning. Considered above from a different perspective, one constraining space for WHMs is the guidebook or backpacker magazine. My interviewees use *Lonely Planet* in a variety of ways. Some read it cover to cover. They discover Australia within its pages. But many treat it like a directory, opening it only at the last minute, to find accommodation on arrival somewhere new. Most are reflexive in their use. "I might read around but I don't go around with my nose in it, you know. I don't use it like a bible" says Amanda, aware that some people might, and of how that might be constraining. Guidebook publishers play an important role in all of this. Charlotte Hindle of Lonely Planet Publications worries about the potential influence her guidebooks have on both travellers and their destinations. These concerns are reflected in the Foreword of my guide to Australia (Lonely Planet 2000: 18):

The best way to use a Lonely Planet guidebook is any way you choose. At Lonely Planet we believe the most memorable travel experiences are often those that are unexpected,

and the finest discoveries are those you make yourself. Guidebooks are not intended to be used as if they provide a detailed set of infallible instructions!

“The best way to use a Lonely Planet guidebook is any way you choose”. Agency is important to this story because the constraints within which WHMs must work and holiday are really not that narrow or heavy. Space is again important here, this time on a smaller scale. Edensor (1998) notes that tourism spaces are differently regulated. With Sibley’s (1988) purified and heterogeneous spaces in mind, he gives us enclavic tourist spaces (restrictive, cut off from locals, shielded from sights, sounds and smells, commodified, single-function, familiar, staged, likely to perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices) and heterogeneous tourist spaces (open, inclusive, sensually rich, hybrid, unpredictable, affording of encounters, confrontations and dialogue, encouraging of improvisation). The spaces of WHMs are power-full in many ways. The beach, often taken to symbolise freedom and egalitarianism (Shields 1991, Inglis 2000), is where Jeanne feels most self-conscious in Sydney. Hostels carry constraining elements of the backpacker industry to backpackers through their notice boards and tour desks. Nevertheless, on the whole WHM spaces look much more like heterogeneous than enclavic tourist spaces. Compared to previous times, when many hostels would employ wardens to enforce curfews from 10pm (after locking out travellers between 9am and 5pm!), today’s hostels, with their dorms and communal rooms, their bars and diverse clientele (on one night in Canberra YHA, for example, I spoke with a 70-year-old Australian woman visiting family, a house-hunting lawyer, and a South Korean student), today’s hostels are spaces of relative freedom.

WHM spaces are diverse. An assumption made by many involved with WHMs, from players in Sydney’s backpacker industry to officers at DIMIA, is that working holidays involve two distinct periods – a period of work, most likely in Sydney, and a period of travel – with self-development and international understanding being confined primarily to the second period, the period of travel. There is something in this assumption. Many WHMs do work first and travel second, and Scott says “Living in Sydney’s just like everyday back home: get up, go to work, come home and do whatever – football, cinema, pub. When you’re travelling you’re on the move, meeting new people, seeing new places, seeing new things. It’s a lot better”. But there are problems with this work as

ordinary and holiday as extraordinary (and therefore transforming) binary. Work spaces are important sites for WHMs. In the diary I kept during my first trip to Australia, I describe how I became male through farm work (and the props of such work): “I’m getting a kick out of labouring outside, wearing big boots and a cowboy hat, and eating steak sandwiches. Guess it’s the testosterone in me!”. On international understanding, Al says “the best way to understand a country is to get to meet people, to actually work there”. And Victoria says “It’s the work environment that really teaches you what a country’s like”. For Ciara and Heidi, the only time they got to meet Australians was at work. For Kyra and Lisa, working in Sydney meant living in one place for a while, and getting to know their (Australian) next-door neighbours.

This question of international understanding deserves deeper consideration. Can travel to Australia really broaden the minds of young Brits and others? Some WHMs do make the effort to meet both local Australians and backpackers from other countries. Ciara shunned Melbourne’s Irish bars because “I haven’t come out to meet Irish people”. Heidi says “there’s no use travelling to Australia if you’re only gonna hang around Dutch people”. In Sydney, Carl and Jeanne lived with three Australians and a New Zealander. Jeanne also had an Australian partner for a while, as did Victoria, who spent much of her time in Australia “consciously avoiding British people”. High points for Tracey were meeting Dutch and German travellers. Leah remembers conversations with Peruvian, Argentinean, Scottish and Welsh backpackers.

Of learning from Australians, Heidi says this:

People who live in Australia, they give me advice. They give me, they tell me about things I should see but also they take me to the footy and the cricket. They explain to me about elections and John Howard and, who’s this woman again who’s considered a racist? Pauline Hanson. And they tell me about Phar Lap the horse, that kind of stuff.

She describes a particular kind of knowledge; what we might call pub-quiz-knowledge. Much WHM knowledge of Australia is marked by this and two further things. First, a number of omissions and silences: Australia’s large Thai population appears, if at all, in relation to restaurants and take-aways only; indigenous Australians only appear in relation Australia’s past, or their music and art. Second, a simplistic opposition, between



cold, grey, hectic Britain and warm, sunny, laid-back Australia. For some, compared to Britain, Australia can do no wrong. Paul says “Their whole system seemed to work a lot better. The public transport system was for a start a lot better than Britain. Their health system as well [...]. Nothing was overpopulated. Nothing was spoilt like things in this country”. In response to Geoffrey Blainey’s attack on ‘black armband’ histories (tales of theft, dispossession, warfare, massacre, resistance), John Pilger (1992a) calls depoliticised and sanitised stories of Australia (heroic tales of man against nature, civilisation, national achievement) ‘white blindfold’ histories. WHMs are well versed in white blindfold histories, for many reasons. Like Hutnyk’s (1996) charity workers in Calcutta, their understanding is mediated by technologies of representation: voice, writing, film. Like tourists more generally, their understanding is guided by a tourism industry only interested in representations that sell (Britton 1991). Like modern subjects more generally, faced with private, consumer and secular cultures (Sennett 1977, Lasch 1980), some WHMs are narcissistic, preoccupied with their selves, only interested in what Australia means for them. Jeanne says of her working holiday “It was gonna give me a chance to do something for myself, that was enjoyable, that wasn’t about anyone else, that was just about me”. Finally, the social spatialisation of Australia as holiday space or pleasure zone is important. Drawing on Shields (1991), O’Reilly (2000) notes that getting to know the Costa del Sol is not in the interests of her research subjects, British migrants, because for them its function is to be socially and culturally marginal – to be different, fun, natural, ludic, erotic – whatever the concrete reality. That tourists are interested in caricature, image, confirmation of expectations, signs, conveniently packaged novelty, the extraordinary, simulations, otherness, is a common theme in the literature (see Boorstin 1964, Britton 1991, Desforges 1998, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001). I found some evidence of this disposition among WHMs. Ciara says “When you come away for a year, you’re in a kind of dreamworld. It’s like reality is back home in Ireland”. And Amanda says:

I don’t feel like I know it like I know England. I don’t know. I haven’t taken much notice of their, maybe it’s through choice that, I don’t know. I mean, I watch the news and I see how the Australian Government treat people and I, I’ll turn away from it. Whereas in England I’d probably be a bit more... I know I’m here for a short time so I don’t absorb it as maybe I should, and the way I would in my home country.

So some WHMs learn little of Australia, though in some cases they think they do. But other WHMs are more reflexive about their position as tourists. Consider the following quotations from Al (first) and Jeanne (second):

Whether I'd go there and work solidly for a year, whether I'd see a different Australia to the type of Australia I saw. Even though I was in a more permanent position, you're still not tied or confined to the same sort of responsibilities. You know at the end of the day you could just walk out of that job and it wouldn't really impact on you in the same way that it would in England. It wouldn't have the same sort of implications.

The quality of life is good. I mean, having said that, I may, I may have a different opinion if I was to be here [...]. You know, I only have a good quality of life here because I haven't got the, you know, I haven't got the things like a house, a car. You know, what I earn I can spend, which I've never been able to do before. So that colours it a bit.

Some WHMs make a point of reading the papers, watching the news, listening to the radio, talking to neighbours and workmates, reading black armband histories such as Robert Hughes' (1988) *The Fatal Shore*, John Pilger's (1992) *A Secret Country*, or John Birmingham's (2000) *Leviathan*. It may be said that these WHMs do learn something of Australia, or of the relationship between Australia and Britain at least. Al says "Travelling and living abroad exposes you to alternatives and you develop a slightly more critical image of what home is [...]. I learnt, basically in terms of life view, that there are other ways to live. There are alternatives". A high point for Ruth was "meeting people and finding out everyone's not like you – not everyone comes from Sheffield".

The 'how' part of this learning or understanding again relates to both time and space. Echoing ethnographers everywhere, Al says "The amount of time you spend is very important in terms of being able to soak things up". Scott says "you need time to get the atmosphere of a certain place". Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2001) suggests that tourism, understood as an intense series of exciting, selected, themed, collectable experiences, is incompatible with understanding existential reality, which is often repetitive, mundane, fraught, diffuse and familiar. But while two-week holidays involve hotel rooms and coaches, museums and galleries, restaurants and bars, shops and beaches, 12-month working holidays involve neighbours, work colleagues, public transport, supermarkets, favourite radio programmes and newspaper columnists. As for space, for those WHMs who learn to think differently, being on the other side of the world, away from family and

friends, is important. Lisa speaks of “getting outside your culture, getting outside your society. And you have the freedom then to explore what you value, what you think is right”. Referring to how tourists observe a strange macroenvironment from the security of a familiar microenvironment, Cohen (1972) writes of the tourist bubble. But Ruth reminds us of another environmental bubble: “at home it’s hard to meet new people and to experience new things cause you’re in this little bubble”.

## 6.6 Conclusion

I began this chapter with some concerns of my corporate interviewees: travel in Australia has become too easy, so backpackers and WHMs fail to achieve personal development or acquire international understanding like they used to. In subsequent sections, I made no attempt to address this narrative of loss in full. After all, concerns range from backpackers not mixing with the locals to WHMs rejecting Australia as a soft destination, and the future of backpacking in Australia depends on so many factors not covered in this chapter: exchange rates; unemployment rates; immigration legislation; negotiations between different government departments (immigration, health, trade), industries (horticulture, hospitality) and trades unions; and much more besides. But I do seek to address those concerns which relate to my own research question: what are the implications of such working holidays for their makers? In subsequent sections, I suggest that this narrative of loss is founded on some substance. WHM practices are highly structured by Australia’s backpacker industry, family and friends, and technologies of representation. I also suggest, however, that this narrative risks simultaneously overestimating WHMs, as serious and capable subjects travelling to be challenged, and underestimating them, as passive consumers of dominant production and autonomous meaning. For some WHMs, travel in Australia remains a challenge, so they return home reskilled, with strong narratives, having demonstrated certain qualities. And the constraints on WHMs are really not that narrow or heavy. WHMs actively use technologies of representation. Some read black armband histories. Many exhibit reflexivity in their dealings with Australia and Australians.

These findings, therefore, lend some support to that narrative of loss held by corporate interviewees, journalists and tourism theorists alike. They contribute a story of backpacker industry competition and professionalisation, linked to both general conditions (neoliberal deregulation of air travel and insurance sales) and specific conditions (the Childers fire and that broad working definition of a backpacker used by the Bureau of Tourism Research through the 1990s). But these findings lend more support to that tradition of tourism research which views tourists as active, capable, creative, reflexive human beings, and tourism as productive of transformation, empowerment, identities, mentalities, and friendships (Crouch 1999, Löfgren 1999, Inglis 2000, Franklin 2003). They contribute tentative answers to the ‘how’ questions of personal development and international understanding. WHM personal development rests on space (weakly circumscribed space, located away from the constraints of home), time (slow time, which affords reflection), and inscription (in diaries, photo albums, CVs, and passports). As regards international understanding, much WHM knowledge of Australia is admittedly of the pub-quiz variety, and exhibits silences, simplistic oppositions and white blindfold histories, but many WHMs *use* Australia’s backpacker industry (in the de Certeau sense), read guidebooks and black armband histories reflexively, move between numerous heterogeneous spaces, including work-places, and take their time, much like ethnographers do.

All this is not to suggest that working holidays are simply a force for good. Indeed, what people make of working holidays depends on their position (as WHM, or travel agent, or next-door neighbour to 10 or 12 hard-partying WHMs in Coogee or Bondi – see Chapter 7). Rather, the story of British WHMs in Australia is in many ways one of contradictions. WHMs exhibit both competence and incompetence. Australia’s social spatialisation as liminal space aids personal development but hinders international understanding. Sydney’s backpacker industry has good intentions (to spread backpackers around Australia, for example) but is itself constrained by the forces of competition (there is profit to be had in ‘herding’ or ‘ponding’ backpackers). And, though some WHMs seek escape from the stresses of modern life, many return home reskilled for those exact stresses, confident in their ability to tolerate difference and cope with change, having

learnt the importance of slow time, time for reflection, and having learnt how to order reflections, how to preserve the cumulative nature of achievement, through inscription.

This last contradiction points to a research agenda. There is some need for alternative accounts of the present to those which view the period between the Second World War and the last few decades as a golden one – of long-term time, cumulative achievement, routine and predictability, clear stories and linear narratives – and the contemporary period as a corrosive one – of immediate and disjointed time, episodes and fragments, uncertainty, disorientation and anxiety (see Sennett 1998, for example). Such an agenda has good foundations: in the work of Giddens (1991) on the emergence of new mechanisms of self-identity which are shaped by and shape the structuring institutions of modernity; in the work of Löfgren (1999), who views holiday destinations as laboratories or training grounds at which modernity is made; and in the work of Franklin (2003), who argues that tourism was primarily and intricately involved in the establishment of modernity – it helped develop our restless interest in the world, in things new and exotic, which is essential to consumer society, and it helped develop our access to and confidence in the world, which are essential to open markets, knowledge economies etc. This chapter, I hope, contributes some new characters to this agenda: reflexive WHMs, with modern skills and strong narratives, born of slow time, a little risk, and much inscription. In doing so, I hope, it raises some new questions. What of those ineligible for such programmes as Australia's WHP? Recall from Chapter 1 that WHMs must have no dependent children, and must be citizens of certain countries (12 in total, none in South America, none in Africa), aged between 18 and 30 years, and of good health (have no disease or disability which is likely to endanger or be of cost to the Australian community), wealth (have approximately AU\$5000 for personal support during their stay and return airfare home) and character (have no convictions and no mental illness). And recall from Chapters 1 and 5 that my research was carried out in Australia against the background of refugee detention centres and the 'Fortress Australia' 2002 Budget settlement. If there is cause for concern here, therefore, it might not be that contemporary travel does nothing for people – that narrative of loss. Rather, it might be that certain forms of travel in the present do much for some people, preparing them for a world of episodes and fragments, yet access to such forms of travel remains limited.

## CHAPTER 7: MOBILITY AND LOCALITY<sup>33</sup>

### 7.1 Introduction

What are the implications of this WHM presence for Australia and Australians? Of all my research questions, I both can and want to say least about this one. Why? For three reasons. First, there has been plenty written about the economic impacts of tourism by geographers and, more specifically, researchers of Australia's WHP. Second, the two most obvious literatures – hosts and guests, and contact zones – in many ways do not apply. And Third, geography matters, and my research was concentrated in Sydney, and my focus was WHMs, not local residents, who might have told me much, given more resources for this project (time, funding etc.). I discuss these reasons in detail under the heading 'Literatures and localities' (Section 7.2).

In Section 7.3, I turn to what *can* be said in this chapter. First, I complete my thick description of WHMs begun in Chapters 1, 5 and 6. After all, to write of implications for Australia and Australians, we must first establish what WHMs do in Australia, or at least in Sydney. The section's heading, 'Travelling and dwelling in Sydney', is inspired by Clifford (1992), after whom I suggest that WHMs cope with and share the enjoyment of 12 months in Australia by travelling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-travelling – practices which have emotion-full implications for individual WHMs and power-full implications for relations between WHMs. Continuing on from this, in Section 7.4, I present two case studies of WHM travelling and dwelling in Sydney: Sydney Central, and Sydney's Southern Beaches (specifically Bondi and Coogee). I report that WHMs are much more welcome in Sydney Central than in Bondi and Coogee. And I discuss a number of concepts, some more useful than others, for understanding why this might be the case: globals and locals; relatively mobile and fixed transnationals; series A and B time (Urry 2000); land and landscape (Urry 2000).

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<sup>33</sup> A version of this chapter was submitted for publication under the title 'Detailing Transnational Lives of the Middle: British Working Holiday Makers in Sydney'. It has been accepted with revisions by the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.

## 7.2 Literatures and localities

*Why, of all my research questions, do I have least to say about this question of implications for Australia and Australians?*

Because there has been plenty written about the economic impacts of tourism by geographers (Squire 1994) and, more specifically, researchers of Australia's WHP. Since the mid-1990s, three well-funded projects have focused almost exclusively on the labour market effects of Australia's WHP. In 1995, Murphy, of the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, surveyed 438 WHMs and 103 Australian employers of WHMs. She found that many WHMs work in low-paid jobs; many Australians prefer unemployment to such jobs; and, given the option, many employers prefer Australians to WHMs because WHMs may not work in the same job for more than three months. She did find that some Japanese employers (owners of restaurants and duty-free stores in Queensland) prefer Japanese WHMs over Australians, for their language and cultural skills. But overall she concluded (ppxiv-xv):

The effect of WHMs on the labour market is likely to be marginal, given that they are generally seen as back-up in markets where there are labour shortages, and they account for a very small share of the total labour force (0.4 per cent). In addition, it should be borne in mind that young Australians in similar numbers depart every year as WHMs.

If the demand effect – the effect of WHMs' spending – is taken into account, it is likely that overall WHMs have a positive (albeit small) effect on the labour market, because their expenditure leads to the creation of employment and growth.

In 1997, the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration expressed concerns that Japanese tour operators in Queensland prefer cheap Japanese WHMs to well-qualified but expensive Australian workers, and that the supply of WHMs across Australia enables some employers to neglect local training needs. But it also noted that WHMs are an important source of labour for certain industries at certain times (the horticulture industry at harvest time, for example); they spend over AU\$400 million annually, right across the country, including most of the money they earn in Australia; and the WHP generates further tourism, future business links, and future skilled migration. On balance, it concluded and recommended "that Australia's working holiday programme be maintained because it generates economic benefits" (pxvii). Most

recently, in 2002, Harding and Webster, of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, found that most employers do not regard WHMs as more skilled, more honest, better spoken, or harder working than Australian workers. Indeed, some employers regard WHMs as just more paper work. But they take on WHMs nevertheless, because too many unemployed Australians decline the low-skilled, low-paid, short-term opportunities they offer. Through a set of complex calculations (using data on the working and spending practices of WHMs), Harding and Webster conclude that the net labour market effect of Australia's WHP is positive: each year, approximately 80,000 WHMs create approximately 8,000 jobs for Australian workers.

My own research suggests five additional comments on economic impacts. First, as should be clear from Chapters 1 to 6, WHMs are a diverse bunch. Some WHMs bring something more to Australian employers than a willingness to accept poor work conditions. Carl, for example, an expert in British utilities, brought his experience and knowledge, and worked as a deregulation consultant to Energy Australia. Second, as should be clear from Chapter 6, many WHMs are both thoughtful and resourceful. Back in Britain, they speak with friends and siblings already out in Australia, and they search the Internet. They wait out periods of labour surplus, and time their arrival in Australia for periods of labour demand. The figures support this comment. In 1988-9, 45,136 working holiday visas were issued. This figure fell to 25,557 in 1992-3, as recession and unemployment hit Australia. It then rose to 76,570 in 2000-1, as word got back to potential WHMs that Sydney, host to the Olympic Games, was desperate for builders, translators, bar and restaurant staff etc.

My third comment is that, in the face of pressure from unions such as the CFMEU (Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union) and TWU (Transport Workers Union), researchers are right to emphasise the effects of WHM consumption. I asked my WHM interviewees to list the significant things they had purchased since arriving in Australia. Items from these lists include: compact disk, stereo, bed, mattress, clothes rack, bedding, towel, book, chest of drawers, backpack, travel guide, photo album, poster, fan heater, candle holder, clothes, sunglasses, mobile phone, makeup, perfume, bike, jewellery, electric light, washing machine, tent, table, chair, photo frame, hair dryer, kettle.



saucepan, and much, much more. I also asked my WHM interviewees to record the things they had purchased during the week between interview one and interview two. Items from these lists include: newspaper, groceries, takeaway food, coffee, beer and wine, video rental, bus, train and taxi fare, birthday card, petrol, parking permit, entry to gym and swimming pool, camera film, suncream, cinema ticket, insect repellent, phone card, magazine, cigarettes, and much, much more. In addition, credit-card-carrying friends and family visit WHMs in Australia (Fiona's mother, sister and friend, Vinnie's girlfriend, Jeanne's two friends). Yes, WHMs and their visitors only deal directly with shop assistants etc., and such tourist industry jobs (low-paid, part-time, short-term) rank poorly alongside many other jobs (Crang 1997). But the goods that WHMs buy are not simply sold by shop assistants. They are made from raw materials (though not necessarily in Australia), transported to market, and sold in seasonally refitted shops.

While researchers do well to emphasise WHM consumption, they might emphasise better the reciprocal nature of Australia's WHP. Britain also has such a programme. The details are slightly different: WHMs must be aged between 17 and 27 years; they may stay for two years, but must work for only half of their stay; and they must not work in senior positions (managers, lawyers, doctors etc.)<sup>34</sup>. In 2000, 18,969 British working holiday visas were issued to Australian citizens (Home Office figures). This is less than half the 39,550 Australian visas issued to British citizens in 2000. But many additional Australians come to Britain for what is essentially a working holiday by other means; most often, by drawing on the British citizenship of a grandparent<sup>35</sup>. This reverse movement is important for two reasons. First, it goes some way towards cancelling out many of the already relatively insignificant labour market effects of Australia's working holiday programme. And second, because of the current rate at which the British Pound and the Australian Dollar exchange, Australian WHMs in Britain tend neither to take many Australian dollars with them to Britain, nor to spend many of the Pounds they earn in Britain on their travels in Europe. I gather from friends and relatives in Australia and

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<sup>34</sup> The 2002 White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* placed Britain's WHP under review. With recruitment difficulties, economic growth, and illegal working in mind, the Home Office proposes that the programme be extended to more countries, the age range be raised to 30, the work period be lengthened, and senior positions be opened up to WHMs.

<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, neither the British Home Office nor the Australian Department of Immigration hold reliable figures for this group of unofficial WHMs.

New Zealand that many antipodean WHMs return home with thousands of British Pounds, which they exchange for thousands more dollars, with which they fund training courses, put down deposits on houses etc. Which brings me to my fifth and final comment. If we play at being economists, and put to one side the negative experiences of a few Japanese-speaking Queenslanders, we see that it is the *net* economic impact which is important here. And all the evidence suggests that this net economic impact of Australia's WHP is positive yet, most importantly, small and relatively insignificant.

*Why, of all my research questions, do I have least to say about this question of implications for Australia and Australians?*

Because the two most obvious literatures – hosts and guests (see Smith 1989 for an overview) and contact zones (see Hall 1995 on transculturation for a strong example; see Harvey 1989 on the postmodern city as emporium for a weak example) – in many ways do not apply. Australia has rich, but in no way delicious, colonial and multicultural histories (see Chapter 5). With hindsight, many of the implications of Europe's first visit to Australia in the late eighteenth century are obvious. Approximately 220,000 Aboriginies died from disease, shootings and hangings (Chambers 1999, Bryson 2001). The Europeans settled land and built English style cities and parks (Birmingham 2000). They brought rabbits for sport which stripped Victoria of emu bush, pushing livestock into areas at risk to overgrazing, producing much of Australia's iconic desert landscape (Bryson 2001). But today, most WHMs encounter nothing so different or seemingly unified as Aboriginal Australia. Rather, on the one hand, they encounter the achievements and descendents of convicts, settlers and 10 Pound Poms, and, on the other, they encounter the 27% of Australians born overseas (2001 Census), in China, Italy, Syria, Chile, and so on. In addition to Australia's colonial history, and linked to its multicultural history, in cities such as Sydney, tourism is now infused or blended into the everyday (Urry 2002a, Franklin 2003). With or without WHMs, Sydney is touristic: spectacular; exotic; geared towards leisure (walking, shopping); full of commodities, musics, foods, styles and peoples.

*Why, of all my research questions, do I have least to say about this question of implications for Australia and Australians?*

Because geography matters. WHMs visit many places in Australia. And they visit some places more than others. (In 1997, Buchanan and Rossetto found that 79% of backpackers visit Sydney, 48% Melbourne, 48% Cairns, 42% Brisbane, 38% Darwin, 38% Alice Springs, 37% Byron Bay, and 37% Ayers Rock/Uluru). These places play different roles in each working holiday. Some places remake themselves for tourist tastes of the authentic and spectacular. For example, the backpacker tour bus Oz Experience stops at the Namoi Hills Cattle Station, where WHMs get to crack whips, make didgeridoos, search for gems, line dance, and have their clothing scarred with a shotgun (*The Guardian*, 09/06/01). Other places are remade by WHM labour and “vibrancy”. After the Childers fire, the words of Isis Shire Mayor, Councillor Bill Trevor, made Australia’s national newspapers:

These young people have become part of the very essence of our town. With our young people being lost to Brisbane and Sydney for education, the backpackers are filling a void and creating a vibrancy for us we could never have expected [...]. To hear the different voices, the different accents in the street, has added something to the heart of our small community (*The Australian*, 26/06/00, p1).

The backpackers started coming about eight years ago and they are a mainstay of our labour force. Some have been back two or three times. We even get letters and postcards from those who have left [...]. They’re regarded as locals and are looked on very fondly [...]. With our children going off to study at university or seek work elsewhere, they have added a vibrancy to the community [...]. You walk the streets and hear the young people speaking with Irish accents and the voices of other nationalities. It gives a nice feeling to the place (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24/06/00, p9).

We must be careful here. Dead pupils are always described as bright and popular by their headteachers. Either dull and unpopular children never die, or else Councillor Bill Trevor’s comments must be read within this tradition. Yet I heard similar comments (during informal conversations with local residents) in Maroopna, a fruit picking community in Victoria, about living WHMs, who help farmers get the crops in, spend money on the High Street, and lend their weight to debates about declining rural services. (To the delight of many local residents, Maroopna received two new policemen in 2002, not because of rising crime, but because WHMs were viewed to constitute an increase in population).

In addition to ‘authentic’, spectacular Namoi Hills Cattle Station, and working, “vibrant” Childers and Maroopna, there seem to be other places remade by WHMs (and other tourists) as party towns. Working in Sydney, I read a newspaper article entitled ‘Mad and Bad in Byron’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 01/04/02, p17). Byron Bay Shire has a population of 30,000 and a rate base of just AU\$7 million per annum. But it receives up to 30,000 visitors each summer weekend, placing stress on traffic, water (water consumption rose 44% between summer 2001 and summer 2002), rubbish (the local dump is full and excess is switched to Ipswich), and sewerage systems (sewerage flows rose 24% between summer 2001 and summer 2002 – the West Byron Treatment Plant is currently being upgraded at a cost of AU\$24 million). Mayor Tom Wilson was quoted in the story:

In the Bay people know it has gone too far. It has produced alienation of the local population, who feel they have lost control. We’ve got to the stage where everyone is pissed off because they can’t park. The sort of tourism we have doesn’t meet the expectations of the community.

A public meeting has been held to discuss the behaviour of backpackers (who, it is claimed, drink heavily, piss in the street, and host loud parties in overcrowded houses). Two sides are taking shape among local residents (according to this particular journalist): the developers, focused on the tourist dollar; and the preservationists, focused on social and cultural life in Byron. I return to many of these themes in Section 7.4, ‘Sydney Central and Sydney’s Southern Beaches’. Between here and there is Section 7.3, where I seek to establish what WHMs do in Sydney.

### **7.3 Travelling and Dwelling in Sydney**

In his influential paper, ‘Travelling cultures’ (1992), James Clifford makes the following argument. Traditional anthropology has a localising strategy. It centres culture around a particular locus, a mappable, manageable field (the village, the laboratory). It studies localised dwelling and rooted native experience. It marginalises or erases travel, transport technologies, prior and ongoing contact with other places, national context, and the wider global world of intercultural import-export. Clifford believes that it is time to

rethink cultures, as sites of both travelling and dwelling. It is time to concern ourselves with complex, historical, hybrid, cosmopolitan, travelling subjects (missionaries, merchants, tourists etc.); with hotels, motels, stations, airports; with fleeting encounters, inauthenticity, exile, rootlessness, but also exploration, escape and transformation; with the knowledges, stories and traditions travel produces. Late in the paper, we get this pivotal sentence (p108):

I'm not saying there are no locales or no homes, that everyone is – or should be – travelling, or cosmopolitan, or deterritorialised. This is not nomadology. Rather, I'm trying to sketch a comparative studies approach to specific histories, tactics, everyday practices of dwelling and travelling: travelling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-travelling.

The sentence is pivotal, by my reading, for three reasons. First, he acknowledges that not everyone is travelling, or cosmopolitan, or deterritorialised – a point I return to in Section 7.4. Second, he positions the paper as a starting point, a “sketch”. Third, *he writes* “travelling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-travelling”, but *he writes little of* travelling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-travelling. As concepts, he leaves them open; a sketch inviting further work. In this section, after one last brief introduction to WHM Sydney, I seek to do this further work by adding colour to the concepts of travelling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-travelling through attention to WHM practices in Sydney.

### 7.3.1 WHM Sydney

WHM Sydney describes those areas of Sydney most frequented by WHMs: Sydney Central, Kings Cross (just east of Sydney Central), Bondi and Coogee (Sydney's Southern Beaches), Glebe and Newtown (just west of Sydney Central), and Manly (the first of Sydney's Northern Beaches) (see Map B). I say something of these areas in Chapters 1, 5 and 6. I'll say something more of them in the remaining sections of the present chapter. In this section, however, I wish to make two points. First, there is much that unites the areas of Sydney most frequented by WHMs. All are dotted with backpacker hostels, most of which exhibit dorm rooms (sleeping between four and 12, usually on bunk beds, sometimes gendered and sometimes mixed, rucksacks, piles of clothes, sleeping bags); a reception area (notice boards advertising tours and sibling hostels and cars for sale); a communal room (cosy chairs, a television, a pool table or

ping pong table maybe); an outside space (less-cosy chairs, a barbecue, a pool maybe). WHM Sydney accommodates travellers in apartments also (two, more often four, as many as six WHMs per two-bedroom apartment). It offers WHMs entertainment and sometimes work opportunities in the form of cafes, restaurants, pubs and clubs (the Kings Cross Hotel, the Coogee Bay Hotel). It offers two sides of temporary or short-term or mobile Sydney: a light side (Internet cafes, travel agents, takeaway food), upon which WHMs thrive, and beneath which WHMs meet; and a dark side (adult book shops, massage parlours), since WHMs are not the only travellers in town, and which WHMs find exciting but also manage to avoid through time stratification strategies (Albrow 1997). Finally, WHM Sydney offers landmarks or attractions or icons. Sydney Central covers Sydney Central train and coach station, Chinatown, and Paddy's Market. Down the main shopping thoroughfare of George Street, it points towards Darling Harbour and Circular Quay (the Opera House, the Harbour Bridge). Kings Cross has its famous El Alamein Fountain and Coca Cola sign (think Piccadilly Circus in London). Bondi, Coogee and Manly have their beaches. Glebe and Newtown have their cultural centres (Glebe Buddhist Centre, Newtown Dendy cinema).

These last few comments bring me to my second point. In addition to there being much that unites those areas of Sydney most frequented by WHMs, there is also much that divides them. The hostels in Sydney Central tend to be large and impersonal (Sydney Central YHA). Many WHMs arrive by coach or train at Sydney Central station, and spend a night or two somewhere close by, mingling with other outsiders (Chinatown, Sydney University of Technology), before moving inside to Kings Cross or some place. A few older WHMs stay longer in Sydney Central, however, because it lies next to the Central Business District (employment and shopping opportunities), and because luxury apartments are going cheap now that the 2000 Olympics boom has turned the corner. The hostels in Kings Cross, by contrast, tend to be smaller, long-established, and configured for partying (the Pink House, the Jolly Swagman). Ever since American troops were given leave from Vietnam in neighbouring Woolloomooloo, Kings Cross has been a party place. Many bars are open 24 hours (the Bourbon and Beefsteak). The dark side of mobile Sydney is particularly evident in Kings Cross: strip clubs, prostitutes, drug dealers, biker gangs. But WHMs do manage to get away from this side of Kings Cross.

taking short walks to Rushcutters Bay (Sydney Yacht Club, tennis courts) and Oxford Street (expensive shops and restaurants, Paddington Village Bazaar). As for the beach suburbs of Coogee, Bondi and Manly, again there is much to divide them. Bondi is large and lively in a way that Coogee is not. Both these southern beach suburbs accommodate WHMs in rather old and rundown apartment blocks – they represent a cheap option for WHMs intent on swimming and subathing while in Sydney. Manly, on the other hand, provides the expensive version of this working holiday. For those who can afford it, Manly provides WHMs with luxury apartments, an ocean beach lined with Norfolk pines, and a ferry ride to work which terminates between the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge. Finally, Glebe and Newtown sit next to each other on the map, and run into one another on the ground, but differ from each other and also from Sydney Central etc. in numerous ways. Glebe is centred on Glebe Point Road, with its cafes, bookshops, markets, Buddhist temple, and Glebe Point Youth Hostel. (With their history of curfews and daily chores, youth hostels tend to be rather quiet places, at least by comparison with some hostels in Kings Cross etc.). Newtown is centred on King Street, with its Thai restaurants, its muscle-bound and dog-led gay men, and its live music venues. Between Glebe and Newtown, WHMs find the oasis that is City Road, with its park, outdoor pool and gym, where WHMs might work off the Indian food of nearby Surry Hills, or the Italian food of nearby Leichhardt. This is WHM Sydney, then, where WHMs travel-in-dwelling and dwell-in-travelling.

### *7.3.2 Travelling-in-dwelling*

Living in WHM Sydney for 12 months is a challenge for many WHMs, despite its attributes of relative safety and familiarity (see Chapter 6). They cope with being away from home (and share their excitement, and display their achievements), first, through travelling-in-dwelling, or travelling-without-moving. WHMs do this relatively passively, through the Internet (websites such as BBCi), television (Australian television schedules contain many British-made programmes such as *The Bill*), radio (the BBC World Service), and objects they carry from home, such as cassettes and compact disks of

music, and photos of family and friends<sup>36</sup>. And they do it (inter)actively, through phonecalls, e-mails, gifts, and face-to-face conversations with other WHMs. With phonecards, phonecalls are remarkably cheap between Britain and Australia. WHMs tend to phone home weekly, and especially on Sundays. Events and festivals are important. On Christmas Day 2001, some 780,000 international calls were made from Australia (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27/12/01). A number of these phonecalls would have involved a thank you for gifts received by post during December, and arrangement making for visits from family and friends during New Year and the January holiday period. On the advice of employment agencies, most WHMs purchase mobile phones on arrival in Australia. Many use these to text family and friends, either for privacy (Shirley calls her siblings but senses her mother and father listening in the background), or as a substitute for conversation. (Why desire a substitute for conversation? See below paragraph). With access at work or via Internet cafes, e-mail is another means of maintaining relationships across distance for WHMs. They send personal e-mails occasionally, and group or newsletter-style e-mails regularly, with photos attached, taken on digital cameras.

I have two points of re-emphasis (from Chapter 5) about this travelling-in-dwelling. First, the relative ease and affordability with which travellers maintain contact with family and friends back home is a recent development. My parents migrated from New Zealand to England in 1967. Their one-way flight, bought on the cheap through a bucket shop, cost approximately £700 (1967 prices). On arrival in London, phonecalls home to relatives in Palmerston North cost £1/minute (again, 1967 prices). They corresponded more often by aerogramme, a slower means of communication in every sense: formal, measured, composed. Even a decade ago, when I first visited Australia myself, Internet-based e-mail accounts and Internet cafes were virtually unheard of. My second point of re-emphasis relates to how all this travelling-in-dwelling makes WHMs feel. In my conclusion to Chapter 5 (p135), I present two sets of quotations. One suggests that information and communication technologies enable WHMs to feel connected, in touch, close. The other suggests that they produce feelings of homesickness, distance and,

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<sup>36</sup> Note that on returning home, WHMs will passively travel-in-dwelling again, this time back in both time and space, to Australia 2001-2, through photo albums, scrap books, souvenirs etc.



paradoxically, frustration with the difficulty of achieving distance from disciplining home life.

### *7.3.3 Dwelling-in-travelling*

In addition to travelling-in-dwelling, WHMs cope with and share the enjoyment of being away from home through dwelling-in-travelling: the forging of much more local associations within Australia, and particularly within Sydney. It should be clear from Chapters 5 and 6 that there is a diverse WHM or backpacker community within Sydney, the specific operation of which deserves comment in some detail, after one more general point. WHM attitudes to Sydney's backpacker community are complex, captured by comments in interview about the standard backpacker conversation. Katy says:

It's all about where you're going and where you've come from, rather than what you did at home or how much you earned [...]. I'd like to think it's made me more tolerant [...]. You come here, you meet people at face value, and, you know, you don't find out, you know, whether they've been to university, where they went to school, what job they did. You don't find any of that out. You just talk to them.

But Jeanne speaks of “small talk”, “transient friendships” and “false environments”. She bemoans that “you seem to have to have like a million travel stories, to kind of impress people with where you've been and all that kind of business”. On a more analytical level, Lisa adds:

Everyone invariably tells their story when they're travelling, and that's kind of how people place value on other travellers really: where they've been; how long they've been gone for; what stories they can tell; and what's the most dangerous place they've been – things like that.

For some, association among WHMs appears power free (one economy from home is absent: qualifications, occupation, salary). For others, the same community appears power ridden (another economy from away is present: travel stories).

I now turn to the resources on which WHM association rests: objects and technologies; sites; and events and rhythms. Because WHMs move about so much within Sydney, from hostel to apartment, and from job to job, web-based e-mail accounts and mobile

phones are essential for arranging meetings. And because WHMs move about so much between Sydney and elsewhere, continual meetings with new faces occur, for which technologies of sociability are important: card and board games, but also, to loosen inhibitions, alcohol (preferably box wine, which is cheap and large enough to share), tobacco (preferably rolling tobacco, which is easily crashed or seductively rolled for a new face), and cannabis (preferably rolled with tobacco, and passed slowly round the group from touched-hand to touched-hand). Other objects are clothes, through which community is performed – football shirts from home, sarongs from stopovers in Thailand and Indonesia – and magazines, which provide WHMs with the identifier ‘backpacker’ and listings of times and places for meetings – *TNT Magazine*, *British Balls*, *The Word*.

Times and places for meetings. Places or sites are important for dwelling-in-travelling. There are known and appropriately named backpacker pubs: The World, The Globe. Hostels encourage social contact through physical design: dorm rooms for sleeping; communal rooms with pool tables and message boards; outdoor spaces with barbecues. For the most part, such provision is welcomed by WHMs, until they need some time alone, achieved by use of props again: books, personal stereos, and sarongs hung from bunk beds as screens all indicate a desire for privacy. Times – events and rhythms – complete the picture. Pubs and clubs have weekly backpacker nights. Hostels have weekly communal dinners in or nights out. Fellow travellers have birthday parties and leaving parties. Annual festivals include the FA Cup Final, the Eurovision Song Contest, Christmas Day (still on Bondi Beach for many), New Years Eve, Sydney Mardi Gras, the Melbourne Grand Prix, the Melbourne Cup.

Before moving on, to discuss everyday Sydney life for WHMs and their homemaking projects, I have one final point to make about this WHM community, the function of which is not just dwelling-in-travelling but also travelling-in-dwelling. In other words, these two categories are not as discreet as my subheadings suggest. WHMs visit the Kings Cross Hotel for *EastEnders* and Premiership football, and the London Tavern for Old Speckled Hen and single malt whisky. Story-telling about home is fuelled by cups of tea. Situated in the Work and Travel Company’s central Sydney branch, Worldwide Snacks sells Marmite, Heinz Salad Cream, Coleman’s Mustard, HP Brown Sauce, Bisto

Gravy. Amanda searches out travellers from her home town, Birmingham: “I know if I hear a Brummie accent I’ll prick up my ears and go over. And I’ll speak to people quicker than I would if I heard a German accent, or even a Liverpool accent for that matter. So it’s probably just that sense of homeness, ’cause you’re so far away”. Leah, from Ireland, drinks at Scruffy Murphy’s, The Mercantile and The Porterhouse. When drunk enough, she sings her national anthem with the others. But Ciara, also from Ireland, says this of such behaviour:

When I was in Melbourne there were a few Irish bars, and there were a couple, when you go down to the Irish bars, it’s just full of Irish people, and yeah, it was grand. But I wouldn’t do it all the time. It’s nice to meet the odd Irish person. Yeah, fair enough. But to be honest, I haven’t come out to meet Irish people.

Her words point to my discussion in Chapter 6, and to a contradiction, between travelling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-travelling on the one hand, and travel as discovery, exploration, transformation on the other.

WHMs dwell-in-travelling through Sydney’s backpacker community. But many WHMs also construct Sydney as time out from backpacking, to settle into the local community, to become a resident, if only temporarily. Rhythms are important again in this regard, or rather routines, the maintenance of which breeds familiarity, “a crucial bulwark against threatening anxieties” (Giddens 1991: 39). WHMs join gyms, commute to work, read local newspapers, become regulars at local cafes, pubs and convenience stores, make friends with neighbours, go drinking with workmates on a Friday night, support local sports teams on a Saturday afternoon. Also of importance are namings – the Coogee Bay Hotel becomes the CBH, Maroopna Manor becomes the Manor – and material homemaking. Familiarity was one definition of home given by WHMs in interview. Another, most common, was old friends, family and the family home in which they grew up. A third, though, was belongings, and this definition of home is interesting when considering mobile lives, because belongings are portable, or at least accessible wherever there are shops. Jeanne says “I’ve bought, just accumulated, material possessions I suppose. Just to make me feel that, you know, this was my space and I’m not just passing through”. Her flat is filled with home comforts: house plants, photos, posters, a television, a comfortable sofa, a fridge full of (comfort) food and decorated with magnets.

These are her belongings in two senses. Legally, they belong to her, in that she bought them independently. But also, in a cultural sense, she belongs to them, because her sense of home or belonging is embedded in their materiality. In other words, in addition to the stories told by WHMs – they are what they say (see above) – they are what they own.

#### *7.3.4 Traces*

There is one more question for this section. What traces do travelling and dwelling WHMs leave in Sydney? Not many, if we look to much of the tourism literature. Tourists demand pseudo-events, so places embellish ancient rites and spectacularise festivals (Boorstin 1964). Intrusive tourists demand authenticity, so places divide themselves into front- and backstages (MacCannell 1976). Socialised by an increasingly predictable McDonaldised society, tourists demand no surprises, so places become McDisneyised (Ritzer and Laska 1997). WHMs leave few of such traces in Sydney, for three reasons. First, as noted above, tourism has become blended into everyday life (Franklin 2003). Much of Sydney is already embellished, spectacularised, staged, McDisneyised, not for WHMs, but for Sydneysiders themselves. Second, as noted above, many WHMs do demand pseudo-events or staged authenticity at some point during their trip, but they demand it from places like Namoi Hills Cattle Station, not from Sydney. And Third, in many cases, WHMs differ significantly from the research subjects of Boorstin, maybe not MacCannell, but certainly Ritzer and Laska. In Cohen's (1972) schema, WHMs are less institutionalised tourists (organised and individual mass tourists), who find the unfamiliar threatening, and so demand familiar microenvironments (environmental or ecological bubbles – Accor Hotels, McDonalds restaurants etc.), than non-institutionalised tourists (explorers and drifters). In Edensor's (1998) schema, WHMs prefer heterogeneous spaces (multi-functional, hybrid) to enclavic spaces (organised, commodified, privatised, familiar, predictable, staged, themed).

Having said that, there are some things about WHM travelling and dwelling which do stand out, even in Sydney. Walking around Sydney Central, Glebe, Kings Cross, Bondi Coogee, Manly, one sees evidence of England (St George flags hung in apartment windows, Premiership football shirts), and the independent travel circuit (Internet cafes,

laundrettes, travel agents, second hand furniture, book and automobile sales, takeaway food, recruitment agents, photo processing centres, increasingly large hostels, as brightly painted as the backpacks, tanned and tattooed bodies, Thai sarongs, and Indian trousers which pass through their doors) (Figures 7.1 to 7.8). And one hears Bob Marley on the radio behind modified English accents (where every sentence seems to end with a question, with an upwards inflection, because travellers get used to checking the understanding of people for whom English is a second language, and because many Australians speak this way). Yes, one sees and hears these traces if one is purposefully looking for them, as I was. And yes, some of these traces differ little from the stuff of everyday Sydneysider life: takeaway food, recruitment agencies etc. But taken together, and concentrated in particular suburbs of Sydney, these traces are significant, if somewhat obvious and superficial.

I now turn towards some less obvious and superficial implications, and towards two case studies: Sydney Central; and Sydney's Southern Beaches (specifically Bondi and Coogee).

## **7.4 Two case studies**

### *7.4.1 Sydney Central*

In 1996, Frank Sartor, Mayor of Sydney, opened Sydney Central YHA, a 570-bed youth hostel next-door to Sydney Central train station. Why? Because this was one part of Sydney City Council's blueprint for the city, *Living City* (no date or page numbers), which aims "to create a vibrant, living city of world standing that will be prosperous in the long-term", and aspires towards "a vibrant city that is active 24 hours a day". Why? Because, despite containing its own travel agency, information desk, convenience store, swimming pool, and so on (recall the long list from Chapter 6), its guests, from between 50 and 70 countries on any one day, still spill out onto surrounding streets, creating demand for travel shops (STA, Oz Experience), Internet cafes (Global Gossip), bars and restaurants, and eventually creating demand for more hostels (Wake Up, another 500-bed hostel, opened on the same block in summer 2002).





**Figure 7.1: Sydney Central YHA, Sydney Central**



**Figure 7.2:  
Wake Up!  
Sydney Central**





Figure 7.3: Global Gossip, Sydney Central



Figure 7.4: Student Flights, Sydney Central





**Figure 7.5: Bondi Apartments, Bondi**



**Figure 7.6: Noah's Backpackers, Bondi**





Figure 7.7: Backpackers Travel Centre, Bondi

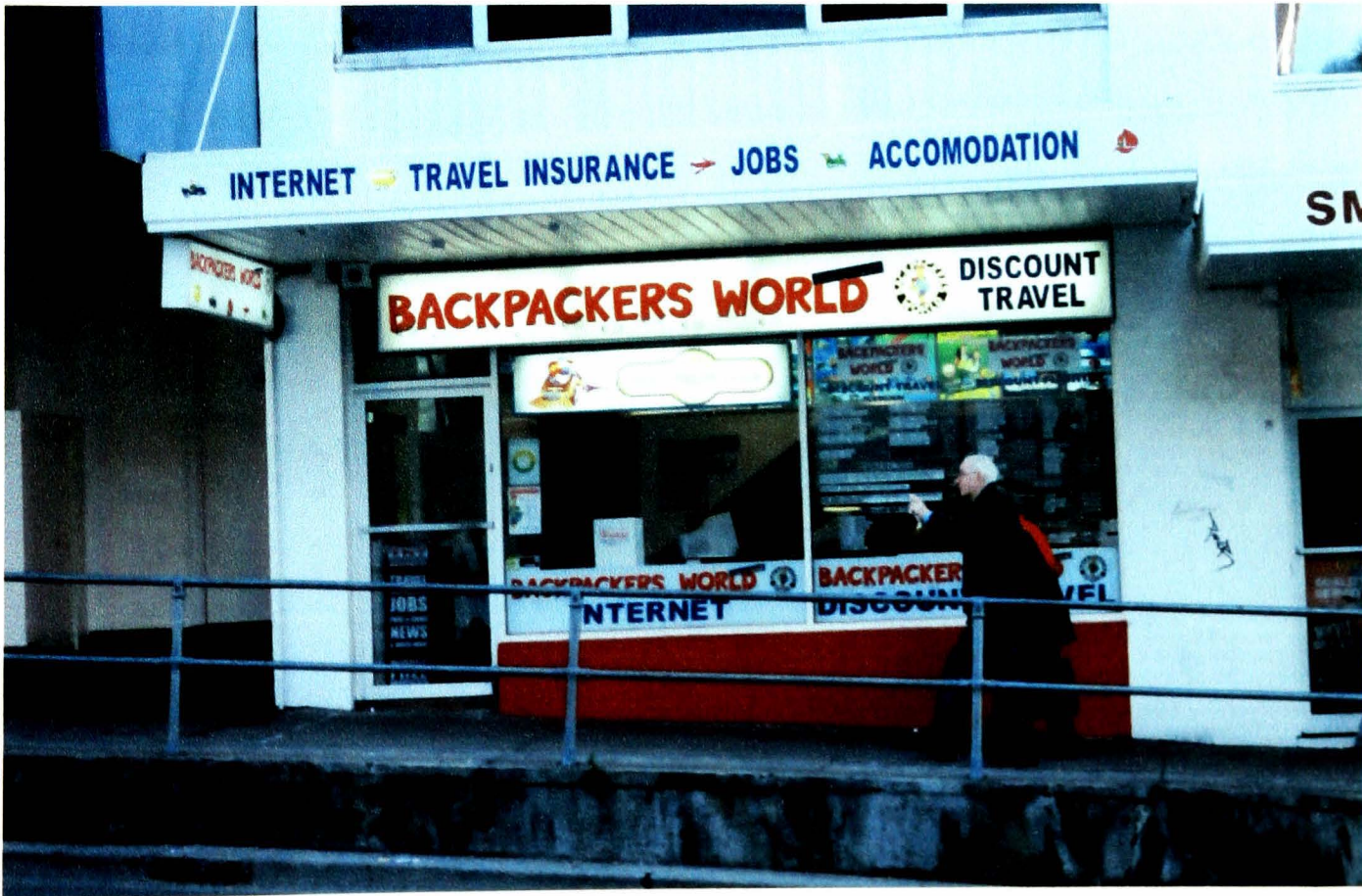


Figure 7.8: Backpackers World, Bondi

In interview, Julian Ledger, Chief Executive Officer, YHA NSW, says:

They, I think, in general, hostels create life. And it's young, healthy, attractive life. And it's seven days a week and it's 16 to 18 hours a day. And a lot of places are busy. Go to Martin Place, it's busy. But you go there on a Sunday morning, you can fire a canon through the place. The American city problem, of sort of the donut, the, the dead heart. And Sydney, the present Mayor, Sartor, pronounced that he wanted the place to be a living city. He opened that place for us. And I think, you know, we made our contribution. And backpackers are more visible than a five-star hotel, which is all self-contained and, you know, everything is in the building. Backpacker hostels tend not to provide everything, so people tend to spill out. And that's good for the place, and they consume food and drink and souvenirs etc. But mainly I think the good thing is that 24-hourness about it. So yeah, we made a bit of a difference down there. I mean, there's a Chinatown as well and huge other developments. I wouldn't take too much credit.

Inadvertently, he raises two important points. First, WHMs are welcome in Sydney Central because they are “young, healthy, attractive”, and because they “spill out” and “consume food and drink and souvenirs”. From the perspective of downtown mayors and chief executive officers, WHMs are the right kind of visiting life, in that refugees or low skilled economic migrants are constructed as many things but rarely as healthy or attractive, and high skilled economic migrants rarely spill out from their office blocks with underground parking, cars with climate control, and apartment blocks with pool and gym (at least in the particular global city narrative we have here). The second point begins with the word Chinatown. WHMs may be the right kind of visiting life (again, from the perspective of downtown mayors and chief executive officers), but this life must be lived in the right kind of space: Sydney Central, because, with the train station and Chinatown, the area should happily, or at least quietly, accommodate 24-hour activity (travelling/dwelling-in-place). What happens, then, when WHMs leave Sydney Central and move into other spaces: the suburban living spaces of less happy, or at least louder voiced, Australians (travelling/dwelling-out-of-place)?

#### *7.4.2 Sydney's Southern Beaches*

A few years after Frank Sartor opened Sydney Central YHA, another Mayor, Dominic Sullivan, Mayor of Randwick, was quoted in a British newspaper regarding the behaviour of British backpackers in Coogee:

The usual train of events is that people move into an apartment, all their mates arrive, and what started out as a flat with four people is soon holding as many as 13. Party night is Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday night, and pretty soon the apartment becomes a dosshouse [...]. It's a lifestyle conflict (The Daily Telegraph, 13/01/01, no page number).

This was in 2001, but British backpackers have been headline news in Coogee and Bondi (Coogee's beachfront neighbour, across the local authority boundary between Randwick and Waverley) for almost 15 years. Problems first came to light when, in 1989, Waverley Council's Works and Environment Committee found that 100 low-income residents had been evicted from their boarding house to make way for British backpackers (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16/09/92). Prior to Sydney's 2000 Olympic Games, this particular problem of boarding house evictions reared its head again (*The Australian*, 23/12/99). In the mid-1990s, press attention switched to the annual Christmas Day gathering of British backpackers on Bondi Beach. Just before midnight on 25 December 1995, brawling among party-goers, which was by no means routine at these events (though leaving the beach covered in old sofas, fridges, bottles and urine was), escalated into bottle and rock throwing directed at riot police. Two days later, Paul Pearce, Mayor of Waverley, told journalists "Basically, we've had a gutful of this party [...]. A large proportion of Bondi Beach and the promenade were unusable for half of today. The promenade and skateboard ramps were covered in broken glass. The place was a bloody mess" (*The Australian*, 27/12/95, p3). For Christmas 1996, Waverley Council organised its own community celebrations on Bondi Beach, Sunsplash on Bondi, which involved surveillance cameras, an entrance fee (AU\$20), a dance party and market, and 30,000 party-goers, including many WHMs, but few local families (*The Australian*, 26/12/96, p2). The Whole Earth Festival replaced Sunsplash on Bondi in 1997. Again, it involved market and food stalls, live music, fairground rides, and also alcohol-free zones, surveillance cameras, and riot police. In turn, the appropriately named Mobile Home replaced the Whole Earth Festival in 1999. This time, only 15,000 tickets were sold, and the south end of Bondi Park was reserved for families. Today, headlines have mostly returned to the persistent problem Councillors of Randwick and Waverley call illegal backpacker hostels:

The mansion that's making Coogee irate (*Eastern Herald*, 18/11/88, p6).

New claims of illegal hostels (*Southern Courier*, 28/11/95, p4).



Thumbs down to backpacker flats (*The Messenger*, 10/12/96, p3).

Council crackdown on illegal hostels (*Southern Courier*, 05/12/00, p7).

Crackdown: Illegal backpacker digs under review (*Southern Courier*, 23/01/01, p1).

Council plans to step up fight against illegal hostels (*Wentworth Courier*, 27/06/01, p12).

By illegal hostels, Councillors mean apartments and houses, including former boarding houses, which landlords rent to backpackers and WHMs on a bed by bed basis, without a Council licence, which makes certain requirements of hostels regarding parking, late night noise, rubbish storage and collection etc.

At this point, I want to pause and take care. I sense the danger of binary thinking; of constructing WHMs as cosmopolitan globals, and residents of Sydney's Southern Beaches as caught-up and done-down locals, in the tradition of early writings on transnationalism (see Field 1971 and Hannerz 1990) and much writing on globalisation (see Castells 1996 and Bauman 1998). To repeat, WHMs are diverse. After reading about backpackers faking homelessness to get subsidised meals from the St Vincent de Paul Society's Matthew Talbot Hostel in Wolloomooloo (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 03/05/00, *The Australian* 04/05/00), I began misspelling British WHMs in my notes: *Brutish WHMs*. But many WHMs behave differently to this. While some parade their difference, singing their national anthems at 2am, others are urbanised as Simmel uses that term (1950): tolerant of others and compliant with local unwritten rules. Predictably, residents of Bondi and Coogee are also diverse. Aboriginal, colonial and multicultural histories inhabit both suburbs. Archeologists tell us that Aborigines have lived on Sydney's southern coastline for approximately 10,000 years. In spite of everything (disease, the Aborigines Protection Board etc. – see Chapter 5), their presence continues, in person (approximately 1,400 residents of Randwick identified themselves as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the last Census of 1996: the figure for Waverley was 209), but also in place names (including Bondi – or Boondi, or Bundi, or Bundy – and Coogee – or Koojah) and rock carvings (on Bondi golf course, for example). Randwick, which covers Botany Bay where the First Fleet landed in 1788, is named after the town in Gloucestershire, England. And Waverley is named after Sir Walter Scott's

‘Waverley novels’, inspired by the Abbey of Waverley in Surrey, England. The Census of 1996 found that 36% of Randwick’s 118,905 residents were born overseas, most commonly in the UK, New Zealand, Greece, Indonesia and Hong Kong. The figure for Waverley is 39% of 61,674, most commonly in the UK, New Zealand, South Africa, Hungary and Poland. Like WHMs, residents of Coogee and Bondi also travel-in-dwelling, to other parts of Australia through the Australian State’s national project, to their previous countries of residence through foreign language newspapers and overseas telephone calls, to Britain through the Commonwealth project, to one particular version of the USA through Hollywood films.

So, to state the obvious, but also to be clear, Bondi and Coogee are not pure localities. Rather, like other places, they are products of the continual and contested material and discursive practices of numerous people and the institutions they create (Smith 2001). Day trippers to Coogee date back to the early 1800s. The Picnickers’ Arms Hotel opened sometime around 1830. The tramline between Coogee and downtown Sydney opened in 1883 (one year before Bondi’s corresponding line). By the 1930s, up to 30,000 people were attending night surf carnivals on Coogee Beach. And all this time there were conflicts of various kinds, over what constitutes decent bathing attire, for example (Dowd 1959). So one conflict of this moment concerns the behaviour of WHMs and other backpackers. Residents of Coogee and Bondi are by no means in agreement about the backpacker problem. The views of Mayors Dominic Sullivan and Paul Pearce, and some local residents and journalists, are presented above. Here, I present some alternative views, of the local Chamber of Commerce, and some other residents and journalists: who welcome the trade WHMs bring; who acknowledge that Randwick receives over 30,000 visitors most sunny Sundays, a few of whom are backpackers, but many of whom are Australians visiting the local racecourse, university (University of New South Wales), teaching hospitals (Prince Henry Hospital and Prince of Wales Hospital), park (Centennial Park), and beaches; and who recognise that WHMs and other backpackers do not vote and are thus an easy target when things go wrong. Writing in *The Australian* (27/12/95, p3), Deborah Bogle, for example, notes that, according to Bondi Patrol Commander Dick Baker, those causing trouble at the 1995 Bondi Christmas Party were not British backpackers at all but Australian “hotrodders” or “car enthusiasts”, who had

previously rioted at Byron Bay on New Years Eve 1993. She also suggests that, more than WHM rowdiness and poor parking, residents should be concerned by “the rim of garbage washed onto the shoreline via stormwater drains left after heavy rain”, and “the young mother emptying the contents of her child’s nappy into the waves where the kids were splashing”, and “the heavy metals fed through Sydney’s sewers and into the sea”. Deborah Bogle is not alone, at least in Waverley, where a survey printed in Waverley Council’s *2000-1 Annual Report* reveals that residents are most concerned with beach cleanliness (96.1%) and sewage pollution (95.1%), and only after water safety (87.6%) and recycling services (87.5%) are they concerned with noise pollution (83.3%) and abandoned motor vehicles (64.2%).

None of this is to say that residents of Coogee and Bondi have nothing to complain about regarding WHMs. Rather, it is to clarify the nature of the problem. Many residents are clearly upset by something, much of which seems to revolve around time or rhythm. In Sydney Central, 24-hour activity is viewed positively. But in Bondi and Coogee, where many people work Monday-to-Friday, nine-to-five, and care for families, who require reproductive sleep between 12am and 6am, 24-hour activity is viewed somewhat differently. In addition, some locals believe WHMs drop litter and abandon cars because their stay is temporary and their commitment to place short-term (as opposed to permanent and long-term, demonstrated by such practices as house buying). Witness the popular essay, ‘Bondi Revisited’, in which Craig McGregor writes “the place has a seedy, run-down air about it [...]. The large number of holiday makers and visitors who drift in and out of the local flats and residential don’t help; they have no loyalty to the place” (Drew *et al*, 1993: 8). Since WHM personal development rests on weakly circumscribed spaces and slow time (Chapter 6), we might usefully draw on Urry (2000) to theorise a part of this conflict between WHMs and residents. Playing cards, writing their diaries, many WHMs would seem to operate on series A time, Bergson’s *duree* (natural, lived, cyclical, rhythmic, kairological time). By contrast, dropping the kids at school, putting in the hours at work, many Coogee and Bondi residents would seem to operate on series B time (social, disciplining, clock time – time to be saved and not wasted). This is except, of course, when both WHMs and Sydney residents operate on instantaneous time, watching television, sending and receiving e-mails etc. And the sense of belonging held

by WHMs in suburban Sydney seems to be what Urry calls 'landscape' (land as a place to be looked at, temporarily), while that held by suburban residents seems to be 'land' (land as a place of work, as functional, to be worked and built upon, more or less permanently).

What I am suggesting here is that, if indeed there is a two-sided conflict in Bondi and Coogee, then the two sides are best thought of not in terms of globals and locals, but rather in terms of relatively mobile and fixed transnationals. WHMs are young, childless, on career breaks, and are thus extensively, frequently and speedily mobile. Many residents have children to care for, mortgages to pay, and are thus intensively and irregularly mobile. Or in positive terms, many residents are pursuing stability and security, what I call purposeful projects of fixity (see Chapter 5). Interestingly, Randwick City Council is seeking to confront the backpacker problem along these lines, if not in these precise terms. For over a decade, backpackers have been viewed as a land use management issue in Sydney. Renting beds to WHMs on a short-term basis requires Council consent. Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act of 1979, and the current Local Environment Plan, such authorised use is restricted in Randwick to just one zone: commercial land use. But more recently, Council officers have begun wrestling with the more fundamental question of how consent authorities configured to serve and regulate fixed populations are to deal with increasingly mobile populations. Noise abatement orders, for example, are useless if served on individuals likely to move on and be replaced, and not properties, the only constants. And existing local authority boundaries are unjust if one Council suffers the costs of visitors and the assets they come to visit (in Randwick's case, primarily beaches and coastal paths), and its neighbour enjoys the revenue of industrial and commercial activities (Botany Bay Council controls Sydney airport, Port Botany, and the Banksmeadow industrial district) – this argument is made in Randwick City Council's *Submission to Inquiry into the Structure of Local Government in Eight Council Areas in the Inner City and Eastern Suburbs of Sydney* (no date).

### *7.4.3 Coogee, Bondi and beyond*

To complete these reflections on Coogee and Bondi, to build on some of the arguments made in my conclusion to Chapter 5 (forces for fixity), and to complete my thick description of British WHMs in Australia, I want to recount a short story, and comment on what happens when 12-month working holidays come to an end. Between 1989 and 1992, Ivan Milat abducted seven hitch-hiking backpackers along the Hume Highway, brutally murdered them, and buried their bodies in the Belanglo State Forest. Sometime in early 2002, the following graffiti appeared on the wall of Videoezy in Coogee: “IVAN MILAT 4 W/END RELEASE”. At the time, this event was interpreted in local newspapers as a reflection of discontent with the presence of WHMs in Coogee. A few months later, however, interviewing a British WHM in a Coogee apartment, I was told the following tale. Late one night in early 2002, a Scottish guy, previously a WHM, just recently the proud new owner of a 457 visa (which enables employers to sponsor foreign nationals for a period of up to four years), left the Coogee Bay Hotel, and stumbled up the hill in search of a Kebab. On reaching his destination, he found a queue stretching out the front door, made up of British backpackers. Continuing round the corner, he addressed the wall of Videoezy, and wrote the words “IVAN MILAT 4 W/END RELEASE”. I have no way of verifying this story, but it fits nicely with this next piece of more concrete information. In response to the late-night noise associated with WHMs in Bondi, a lobby group has been founded by Ian Johnson: Bondi Noise Action Group. Ian Johnson is also a former British backpacker, now settled on Sydney’s Southern Beaches. It seems that some WHMs travel to Australia for 12 months initially, move on to four-year visas with the help of their employers, and then stay a while, further complicating the category ‘local’. And it seems that some of this group become very protective of the lifestyle they have found in Australia. Once through the fence, they seek to shut the gate.

This is a minority, however. The vast majority of WHMs return home to their country of origin after between 12 and 18 months. Approximately half of my interviewees would return with the travelling bug, eager to head off again, this time to more challenging places such as South America, a current fashion. But approximately half would return to



their families, some to their old jobs, with other needs and desires. for stability and settlement, for a stage in the life-cycle characterised by car and house ownership (within the catchment area of a good school), and career and family commencement. Vinnie says “I didn’t really want to be doing this at 30. I’d rather be back home at 30, sort of with a career [...]. I think it’s all to do with age. I’m thinking God I really need a career now. I really need to start settling down a bit”. And Katy says “I wanna do it now, before I get all tied down with a house, mortgage, that kind of thing [...]. I think after a year I’ll be ready to go back and get a job and resume my career and earn some money again, and have a nice flat and a car”. We can cross borders when young and get it out of our systems; to visit Australia is a once-in-a-lifetime experience; and afterwards we must grow up and face the real world (of fixed lives, lived within national boundaries) – these are some common tropes of WHM narratives.

Yet, with portfolio careers, letting agencies etc., surely lives need not be so fixed. Indeed, given the increasing rate at which many of us seem to be shifting jobs, moving house and taking holidays (summer holidays, city breaks, winter sun etc.), surely lives will not be so fixed. So the above tropes and quotations are not about necessity or material conditions, so much as imagination and desire. Between these comments and my conclusion to Chapter 5, I hope that this is now clear. Appadurai (1996) characterises the imagination as a force for transnationalism, and possibly even postnationalism. But some WHMs imagine a life of job security and proximate family, and set about performing such desires: purposeful projects of fixity. Sennett (1998) writes of routine that, while in today’s flexible world it is viewed as evil, in the mid-eighteenth century it was the subject of much debate. He cites Adam Smith (*The Wealth of Nations*, first published 1776), for whom routine was destructive; it numbed the mind, dulled spontaneity, taught boredom. And he cites Diderot (*Encyclopedia*, published from 1751 to 1772), for whom repetition and regular rhythm were positive, fruitful, virtuous forces, teaching control and order, serenity and calm. Sennett’s sympathy lies with Diderot, ironically. He suggests that routine begets narratives; gives shape, depth and coherence to lives. While, as always, there are problems with such grand ideas (surely a singular event – the successful completion of a trip to somewhere in the world considered challenging, for example – might support a strong narrative – see Chapter 6), that

flexibility requires a particular strength of character – exceptional and adventurous individuals, who have the confidence to dwell in disorder and fragmentation, to forget pasts and risk futures – is important. Because, by definition, most people are not exceptional. Rather than nomads – promiscuous, playful polyglots (Braidotti 1994) – many WHMs are occasional travellers, yearning for and acting out stability and authenticity, however elusive and illusory.

## 7.5 Conclusion

Drawing on formal and informal interviews, participant observation, and local history archives, I make a number of claims or contributions in this chapter. First, I suggest that accounts of Australia's WHP focused on labour market effects and economic impacts are right to emphasise consumption effects and net impacts, and might better emphasise WHM diversity, the thoughtful and resourceful way in which WHMs wait out periods of labour surplus before travelling to Australia, and the reciprocal nature of Australia's WHP. Second, I suggest that, as regards tourism and its implications for Australia, geography matters. Some places are remade for tourist tastes of the authentic and spectacular (Naroi Hills Cattle Station). To the delight of many residents, some places are remade by WHM labour and "vibrancy" (Childers, Maroopna). And to the dismay of many residents, some places are remade as party towns (Byron Bay).

Third, I complete my thick description of British WHMs in Sydney and, in doing so, add colour to that sketch offered by Clifford (1992: 108) when he wrote "travelling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-travelling". To cope with and share the enjoyment of 12 months in Australia, WHMs travel-in-dwelling passively, through the Internet, television, radio, and objects such as compact discs (of recorded music) and photographs. And they travel-in-dwelling (inter)actively, through telephone calls, e-mails, gifts, and face-to-face conversations with other WHMs. This travelling-in-dwelling is remarkably easy and affordable today compared with only a decade ago, and it produces contradictory feelings among WHMs, of proximity on the one hand, and homesickness, distance and frustration on the other. For the same reasons of management and display, WHMs dwell-in-travelling through Sydney's backpacker community. For some, this community appears

power free (“it’s all about where you’re going and where you’ve come from, rather than what you did at home or how much you earned”). For others, it appears power ridden (“you seem to have to have like a million travel stories, to kind of impress people with where you’ve been”). This backpacker community rests on three sets of resources: objects and technologies (web-based e-mail accounts, mobile phones, card and board games, box wine and rolling tobacco, clothes and magazines); sites (hostels, backpacker pubs); and events and rhythms (weekly backpacker nights, annual festivals). WHMs also dwell-in-travelling through Sydney’s residential communities. Routines (work, gym, pub), namings (the CBH, the Manor), and belongings (home-comforts, comfort-food) are important in this regard.

Fourth, I recount and seek to theorise two cases of WHMs in Sydney: Sydney Central; and Sydney’s Southern Beaches. WHMs are welcome in Sydney Central, of Sydney Central train station and Chinatown, for their “vibrancy”, their “young, healthy, attractive life”, their consumption of food, drink and souvenirs, and their 24-hour activity. WHMs are less welcome in Coogee and Bondi, of many working and home-owning families, for their partying, their dumping of rubbish and cars, and for precisely that 24-hour activity welcomed in Sydney Central. The conflict in Bondi and Coogee is not one between cosmopolitan globals and caught-up and done-down locals – figures all too common in early writings on transnationalism and much writing on globalisation. WHMs are a diverse bunch, as are the residents of Coogee and Bondi – suburbs which are inhabited by Aboriginal, colonial and multicultural histories, and from which residents travel-in-dwelling themselves. Rather, this conflict is one between relatively mobile and fixed transnationals. It revolves around senses of time and belonging: 24-hour activity; commitment to place; series A and B time; land and landscape (as used by Urry 2000).

My fifth and final point is this. The relatively mobile transnationalism of WHMs rests on numerous factors (see Chapter 5), two of which are choice (which is socialised and not simply free, of course), and life-cycle stage. While many residents of Coogee and Bondi have families to care for and mortgages to pay, and are thus intensively and irregularly mobile, WHMs are young, childless and on career breaks, and are thus extensively, frequently and speedily mobile. On leaving Australia, some WHMs will continue to

travel, having embraced travelling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-travelling as a way of life. But others will return to their families, their old jobs, stability and settlement, car and house ownership, career and family commencement, less sure about the opportunities and pressures presented by relative mobility.

This conclusion is primarily a summary of Chapter 7, though I have sought to make some connections with Chapters 5 and 6, and with the literatures reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. I now turn to the concluding chapter of this thesis, Chapter 8, where I seek to connect more explicitly the literatures, empirical material, and developing themes presented thus far.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

### 8.1 British WHMs in Australia

Two broad points emerge from this case study. First, *working holidays can do much for their makers*. They can encourage personal development, in the form of strong narratives and modern skills, through at least four mechanisms: upheaval; (liminal) space; (slow) time; and inscription. And they can encourage some international understanding, because WHM spaces are heterogeneous, WHM time is ethnographic, some WHMs are reflexive about their position as tourists, and some WHMs are active in their use of constraining structures. An alternative assessment of working holidays is possible, of course. WHM practices are highly structured in Australia, by an increasingly competitive and professional backpacker industry, friends and family, and technologies of representation (guidebooks, backpacker magazines, photography). Some WHMs find the travel-story-economy of Sydney's backpacker community intensely power-full. And some residents of Sydney's Southern Beaches find the 24-hour and short-term rhythms of working holidays problematic. Furthermore, working holidays exhibit numerous contradictions. While liminal space aids personal development (through loss of social coordinates and freedom from restraint – Shields 1991), it hinders international understanding (because concrete reality is never simply different, fun, natural, ludic, erotic – O'Reilly 2000, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001). Similarly, while travelling-in-dwelling *enables* WHMs (to share the pleasures and handle the pressures of 12 months away from home), it undermines such personal development mechanisms as 'upheaval' and 'liminal space'. On balance, however, this case study offers less support to that binary or narrative of loss we find among industry representatives, journalists and some tourism theorists (the classics: Boorstin 1964; MacCannell 1976) – that yesterday's travel was challenging and intense while today's tourism is soft and meaningless – than to the more recent tradition which views tourists as active and creative human beings, and tourism as productive of transformation, mentalities and friendships (Crouch 1999, Löfgren 1999, Inglis 2000, Franklin 2003).

The second point is that *this case study is not a simple story of corporeal mobility*. It is a story of corporeal mobility, of course. And on this finer point, there is no single or primary source for WHM mobility – not desire for pseudo-events (Boorstin 1964), not desire for authenticity (MacCannell 1976), not desire for social distinction (Munt 1994), and not capitalism's historical-geographical development (Harvey 1989, Britton 1991). Rather, there are numerous forces at work: Australia's colonial, white and multicultural histories; Australia's backpacker industry; broad but mundane economic change (exchange rates, interest rates, oil prices, unemployment rates); broad and extraordinary economic change (the organisational shift towards transnational production and consumption); The Australian Tourist Commission; DIMIA; *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*; literal stories and embodied narratives (Byron, Wordsworth, Nolan); family and friendship networks; transportation and communication technologies. But the broad point is that corporeal mobility is neither complete nor ever-expanding – as is sometimes implied by the work of Appadurai (1996), Urry (2000), Smith (2001) and others. Many of the forces for mobility detailed above and in Chapter 5 are double-edged. Take governmental technologies for example. Electronic Travel Authority enables mobility for some, but Maritime Unit Surveillance enforces fixity for others. Now take information and communication technologies, which enable WHMs to feel connected, in touch, close to home, but also produce feelings of homesickness, distance, and, paradoxically, frustration with the difficulty of achieving distance from disciplining home life. Finally, take WHM imagination. Appadurai (1996) characterises the imagination as a force for transnationalism, or even postnationalism. But WHMs imagine a triangle of fixity (job-house-family) or life-cycle stage (job, mortgage, long-term partner, kids, schools), which is feared by some as constraining, but yearned for by others as stable and secure.

## 8.2 Conclusion (not conclusions)

Why is this case study important? Is it not just one person's thoughts regarding a few other people involved in something relatively insignificant? The answer to this second question is both yes and no. I am one person – white, male, middle class. My interpretations are second order at best (Geertz 1973). They are marked by power effects

(domination, silencing, objectification, normalisation – Burawoy 1998). And I interviewed only 19 of approximately 47,000 WHMs present in Australia during 2001-2. The claims I make are positioned and partial, therefore. And there is much further research to be done on working holidays. Focus groups might illuminate how WHMs work out their thoughts and feelings through interactions with others. Filmic approaches might illuminate what WHMs hold to be expected, proper, acceptable behaviour. Longitudinal studies, comparative studies of British and other WHMs, quantitative studies (involving survey sheets informed by the claims of this study), further qualitative fieldwork in Byron Bay and Namoi Hills Cattle Station, interviews with residents of Coogee and Bondi – numerous follow-up projects suggest themselves. For these reasons, I call this final chapter ‘Conclusion’ and not ‘Conclusions’. It concludes my thesis, but no conclusive tone is adopted, whatever the temptation.

Having said that, and still in answer to that second question, I wish to emphasise the serious nature of this research. Recall from Chapter 4 my philosophical foundations: social theory as opposed to positivism (Johnston 1997); reflexive realism and critical constructivism as opposed to the extremes of humanism as voluntarism and individualism, and Marxist-realism as historicism and determinism (Delanty 1997); pragmatic universalism as opposed to postmodernism as method (Albrow 1996). Yes, I am *one* person, to whom communication, interpretation and representation present as many difficulties as the next person. But I am also one *person*, and the humanism I choose insists that a unified human nature makes at least some empathetic understanding possible. I interviewed only 19 WHMs because my sampling was theoretical (appropriate groups, quality, positionality) as opposed to the random sampling of statistical research (number, typicality, representativeness). I did not seek the truth or to prove an hypothesis. I sought multiple versions of reality, a full range of stories – theoretical saturation (Cook and Crang 1995). These 19 interviews constituted just one part of a broad research strategy involving two modes of research practice (ethnography and political economy) and four methods or techniques (paper-based contextual work, corporate interviews, participant observation, and in-depth interviews with WHMs). Because I discuss power effects honestly, this does not mean that I failed to manage them, at least to some extent, through external and internal checks (Schoenberger 1991).

self-presentation, repeat interviews, right to reply, thorough preparation, differently ordered interview guides, research diary notes, WHM one-week diaries.

I have two additional comments. First, it is no longer unusual for researchers in the humanities and social sciences to reject findings and conclusions for incomplete, inconclusive, contestable arguments which seek to persuade and sustain discussion. Second, coherence should not be mistaken for serious research. I find much to unite WHMs in this study. Australia's WHP requires that they are all of a certain age (between 18 and 30 years), that they are all of good health, that they all have access to money etc. They are all tourists, who draw on over 200 years of travel narratives and equipped and trained bodies. And they are all WHMs, and working holidays are in many ways different from other holidays, in that they involve weakly circumscribed and seemingly ordinary spaces (such as places of work), relatively slow and long-term time, and thus they involve a certain amount of productivity, I have argued, in the form of personal development and international understanding. But I also find much to divide WHMs. Nationality and life-cycle stage are significant differences among WHMs. As regards nationality, each nation-state has its own stock of travel narratives. There is much scope for another project on Australia's WHP: a comparative study between British WHMs and WHMs from elsewhere, such as Japan or the Republic of Korea. As regards life-cycle stage, people tend to change in all sorts of ways between the ages of 18 and 30 years. For older WHMs, a 12 month trip to Australia may involve great upheaval, since careers may need to be put on hold, houses may need to be sold or rented out, and long-term partners may need convincing (or not). In Chapter 6, I suggest that upheaval is one mechanism for WHM personal development (along with heterogeneous space, slow time, and inscription). Here, I want to suggest that upheaval is also something which, for older WHMs, can make very real – very immediate and tangible – the middle 'P' of those 'Three Ps of Mobility' introduced in Chapter 1: pleasure, *pressure* and politics.

What can I say about class, gender and ethnicity? It would seem that these are lines of less significant difference among WHMs. In the case of class, let me revisit my critique of Bourdieu's (1984) *Distinction* (Chapter 5 of this document). I make two points. First, Bourdieu's theory rests on assumptions with which I am not comfortable regarding the



primacy of social class and class fraction over gender, age, ethnicity etc. Second, Bourdieu's theory had weak empirical foundations when it was written (in that Bourdieu ignored much ambiguity in the data his team collected from across France during the 1960s – de Certeau 1984), and it has weak empirical foundations now (as a theory for British society over 40 years down the line). This second point is really a point about mobility and fixity. *Distinction* is a book for relatively fixed times. It assumes little social mobility, and little contact between the social classes. In many ways it is out of date in our relatively mobile present, where WHMs exhibit numerous social backgrounds and negotiate travel decisions with differently located others. Having said that, I do not wish to push this argument too far. While I wonder about the work done by social class as an analytical category in the present, I do not doubt the work done by related analytical categories, such as relative wealth and poverty. In such a framework, WHMs are clearly of the socio-economic middle (of which I say more in Section 8.3).

Moving on to gender and ethnicity, there are one or two things I can say about each. WHMs leave their possessions and bank details with mothers (more than fathers), and call their mothers frequently, expecting them to be there at the end of the line. In other words, in various ways, mothers stay fixed so that WHMs may move: mobility and fixity constitute each other. Also on gender, since the reflexive life project of late modernity is open to all, but adventure is an historically founded masculine practice, Elsrud (2001) wonders whether the deployment of travel narratives of risk and adventure might be gendered. I found something of this in my own travel journal from a previous trip to Australia, where I emphasise manual labour, dusty boots, steak sandwiches etc. But I found little of this during my fieldwork for the present study. In a similar way, one might wonder whether the deployment of travel narratives of risk and adventure is racialised, since adventure is an historically founded white practice too. Again, I can speculate. There are very few non-white British WHMs in Australia. But, as regards class, gender and ethnicity, I can do little more than reluctantly speculate. In part, this may be explained with reference to methodology. My 'becoming male' journal entry was made while picking apples in Batlow. Rural Australia is gendered and racialised in a way that downtown Sydney is not. Yet downtown Sydney is where I based my fieldwork. There

is scope, it would seem, for a study of British WHMs in Australia which attends further to (heavily gendered and racialised) rural Australia.

My reluctant gesturing towards class, gender and ethnicity may be explained in part with reference to methodology. But there is more to say about this reluctant gesturing. Thrift (1996: 47) writes of his *oeuvre* that “I have wanted, above all, to communicate the brightness of the event”. In my reading of Thrift, Latour, Geertz and others, I have acquired a distaste for coherence where it rests on reduction. So throughout this document, I write that some WHMs do one thing, and other WHMs do something different; that many WHMs feel one thing, and few WHMs feel something different. I offer various WHM figures: the football fan; the tiny Japanese woman with high-heeled shoes and a shocking pink suitcase; the school leaver with money borrowed from their parents; the suitcase carrier with suit and laptop computer; the deregulation consultant to energy Australia; the desert highway roadhouse barmaid; the Japanese man riding his bicycle across the Nullabor desert; the young woman hitch-hiking around rural New South Wales. But while I write and offer these things, I refuse to produce anything so neat as a typology of WHMs; not because it can’t be done – it can always be done (it frequently is done in tourism studies) – but, rather, because reduction is my enemy here, not incoherence.

### **8.3 Writing mobility, rights to mobility**

Let me refine the question. Why is this case study important? Is it not just well-founded serious research into something relatively insignificant? The answer to this refined question is an emphatic no. Working holidays are in no way relatively insignificant, for three reasons. First, Australia currently issues over 70,000 working holiday visas per year. In addition, Britain, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malta, and the Netherlands all have their own working holiday programmes. Second, working holidays represent one form of contemporary tourism, and “tourism is no longer a specialist consumer product or mode of consumption” (Franklin and Crang 2001: 6). Rather, it is “a significant modality through which transnational modern life is organised” (p6-7). It structures mobilities which “generate new social relations, new ways of living, new ties

to space, new places, new forms of consumption and leisure, new aesthetic sensibilities” (p12). Third, working holidays can do much for their makers (broad point number one), yet their story is not a simple one of corporeal mobility (broad point number two), so the question arises: who gets to travel?

Consider the following selection. Australia’s WHP regulations contain numerous requirements regarding citizenship, age, health, wealth, character, and dependent children. Some WHMs leave responsibilities for possessions, student loans, rented houses etc. with family members and friends. In other words, mobility and fixity constitute each other: the mobility of some WHMs rests on the fixity of a family member or friend. In *Transnational Urbanism*, Smith (2001) places networks of Korean transnationals front and centre in his description of Los Angeles. But only 14% of US citizens own a passport (Hertsgaard 2003). Many residents of Los Angeles are black, poor and stuck in electronic ghettos like South Central (Gooding-Williams 1993, Ong 1999, Thrift 2002). Also in *Transnational Urbanism*, Smith (2001) implies that even the most marginalised lead mobile lives, through the figure of the African street vendor in New York city, and through the case of Amadou Diallo in particular, whose shooting by the New York Police Department brought Kadiatou, his trilingual and highly networked mother, to public attention. I raise this because, while Amadou may not have been privileged in the context of North America, he was certainly privileged in the context of Guinea where he was born. Amadou attended international school in Thailand. Kadiatou, his mother, owns a gem trading company. She is good friends with the Guinean Foreign Minister. She has access to e-mail, fax, satellite television, cellular telephone. The point here is that African street vendors on New York city streets, even refugees detained by the Australian Government, do not prove that *everyone* is on the move. Indeed, the first post-9/11 asylum seeker returned to Afghanistan by Australia was Shah Mohammed Rahim, a doctor by training whose original passage to Australia required people smugglers and a fee of AU\$20,000 – raised by the sale of family property (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20/04/02).

None of this is to deny the importance of mobility. I face forwards and do not wish to be read as conservative. Rather, it is to foreground some differences and tensions too often

glossed over in that part of the literature which has recently swung from absolute fixity to absolute mobility (see Appadurai 1996, Urry 2000, Smith 2001). Immigration legislation and technology, elderly people of poor health, house buying practices (in the right postcode, near the right school) – it is not good enough to label these real fixities as exceptions. I like to think of these mobile times in a way similar to how Albrow (1996) thinks about the modern age. For Albrow, the modern age had certain features (rationality, territoriality, expansion, innovation, applied science, the state, capitalism), but cannot be reduced to capitalism, industrialism or abstract modernity. Rather, it must be understood in relation to all sectors, spheres, activities and events (religion, the economy, science, politics, disease, ideas, discoveries, revolutions, natural disasters). In other words, our theorising may give us theoretical thrust: modernity as expanded control in space and time. But our historical narrative must be a larger, more complex configuration: the modern age as completed by rural populations, poor countries, traditional cultures etc. In yet other words, we may write of core or profiling factors: capitalism, the state, rationality. But we must also write of outside or external factors, contingent historical events, configurational events (discovery of the New World, for example).

The point here is not whether you or I agree with Albrow's take on modernity or even his take on history. The point here is that, as commentators on these seemingly mobile times, we risk providing much theoretical thrust, but little historical narrative. We risk reducing these times to their core or profiling factors. According to Albrow, the expansion of modernity rested on the belief that truth and error, knowledge and ignorance, rationality and irrationality take their shares from a finite pool. But the pool of human experience is expanding and infinite. So modernity was really about the rationality/irrationality dichotomy or tension or binary code – not the expansion of rationality to the exclusion of irrationality, but the categorisation of life in terms of rationality and irrationality. I like to think of the contemporary period in terms of the mobility/fixity dichotomy or tension or binary code – not the expansion of mobility to the exclusion of fixity, but the categorisation of life in terms of mobility and fixity.

On the one hand, such a path leads me towards polarisation models of globalisation. Bauman (1998), for example, holds that we are all on the move, by design or by default, physically or because the world constantly changes around us, *yet there is no unity of effects*. Globalisation divides as much as it unites. For some – the globalised top, the globals, the nomads – globalisation means freedom and hybridity. For others – the locals, the settled, the fixed – globalisation means unhappiness, since the globals set the tone, compose the rules, establish the norms. Poles in Bauman's work include extraterritorial power (like absentee landlords, today's decision-making centres are free from territorial constraints and so disconnected from obligations) and territorial home life (today's employees remain burdened with family duties, home ownership etc.); and also tourists (cosmopolitan businessmen, managers and academics – the globally mobile – wandering contentedly, while entry visas are phased out) and vagabonds (the locally tied, wandering reluctantly, while passport controls are strengthened). With Bauman in mind (and also Castells 1996), I provide news of differently mobile others throughout this study of working holidays: refugees, detention centres, surveillance systems.

On the other hand, however, these polarisation models are, of course, highly problematic. Tourists and vagabonds may be preferable to that lonely figure of nomadism. But why must there be only two experiences of globalisation? At one point, Bauman acknowledges that most people inhabit neither top nor bottom (1998: 4):

'Being on the move' has a radically different, opposite sense for, respectively, those at the top and those at the bottom of the new hierarchy; with the bulk of the population – the 'new middle class', oscillating between the two extremes – bearing the brunt of that opposition and suffering acute existential uncertainty, anxiety and fear as a result.

Latham and Conradson (forthcoming) label such oscillating, bearing and suffering 'middling transnationalism' (though their account balances the pressures and pleasures of mobility in a way that Bauman, at least in the quotation above, does not). Most WHMs and other characters in this study (residents of Bondi and Coogee, even some refugees) are of the middle. For many of them, corporeal mobility is a matter of choice, socialised in particular by life-cycle stage. And for many of them, corporeal mobility elicits contradictory responses, of excited freedom and fearful insecurity. This path leads me back beyond Bauman's polarisation model to Berman's (1982) *All That Is Solid Melts*

*Into Air.* Berman is interested in the adventures, horrors, ambiguities and ironies of modern life, which he reads in texts (Goethe's *Faust*, *The Communist Manifesto*), spatial and social environments (Haussman's Parisian boulevards, Robert Moses' New York city highways), and actual people's lives (Goethe, Marx, Baudelaire). He identifies paradoxical and distinctively modern concerns – a sensibility which has cut across boundaries of geography and society for almost 500 years: on the one hand, a will to change, transform, grow – the thrill of knowledge and new possibilities (*the desire for development*); and on the other, a horror of disorientation and disintegration, a frightening feeling of being overpowered, a desire for stability and coherence (*the tragedy of development*). According to Berman, these concerns (modernist culture) arise from the maelstrom or vortex, fed by social world-historical processes (modernisation): discoveries in the sciences, industrialisation, demographic upheavals, urban growth, mass communication, nation states, social movements, all born of and driven by a capitalist world market characterised by growth, waste and instability (p16).

While I refuse to accept that restless modernity is driven so exclusively by capitalism (see Chapters 3 and 5), I think Berman makes a point worth repeating at this historical moment. The first modernists – Marx, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Whitman, Baudelaire, Dostoevsky – spoke with a particular *rhythm* of pace and energy, and a particular *range* of many voices (self-discovery and self-mockery, self-delight and self-doubt). But in the twentieth century, thinking about modernity stagnated and regressed. Rather than wrestling with ambiguities and contradictions, ironies and tensions, commentators lurched towards crude, closed, flat polarities and totalisations, either embracing modernity (the Italian futurists, the Bauhaus, Le Corbusier, Marshall McLuhan, Alvin Toffler) or condemning modernity (Max Weber, Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault). Berman calls on us to return to the both/and (as opposed to either/or) dialectical modernism of earlier times. Given the argument of this conclusion – that some forms of travel can do much for us, but that mobility is far from absolute, that some recent writings have swung from absolute fixity to absolute mobility, and that some recent writings have focused on theoretical thrust at the expense of historical narrative, that we might usefully rethink the current period in terms of the mobility/fixity dichotomy or tension or binary code, which leads us to polarisation models of globalisation but also textured accounts of

middling transnationalism – given the argument of this conclusion, Berman's call, for more rhythm and range, seems highly relevant to our attempts at writing mobility (and fixity, of course).

Where does all this leave me? Some readers may find these conclusions too hesitant, too modest, too reasonable. They may wish for more controversy. I do hold some strong opinions. Working holidays are different from other forms of tourism. In many ways they are 'better', in that they involve enormous upheaval, both liminal and heterogeneous space, and the slow time of ethnography, which together encourage personal development and international understanding. Yet there is something distasteful about working holidays, especially when taken in Australia by British citizens. Their context is one of differential mobility: Aboriginal Australia, Colonial Australia, refugee detention centres. Of what importance is more international understanding between Britain and White Australia, given such a context? I do hold some strong opinions, but I rarely voice them with force. It is difficult to maintain such force when one blows hot and cold, as I do in the case of working holidays. Also, British WHMs in Australia are numerous and diverse (from kids of 18 to adults of 30), as are the places they visit (from Childers to Byron Bay, and from Sydney Central to Sydney's Southern Beaches). The last thing tourism studies needs is another forceful yet reductive totality theory.

And where do I leave all this? With the present study almost behind me, I face forwards, and the view from here both fascinates and concerns me. I see a pressing problem. In November 2002, The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution published a report (*The Environmental Effects of Civil Aircraft in Flight*) recommending that airport expansion in Britain be halted because aircraft pollution contributes so heavily to global warming. Speaking to journalists, Sir Tom Blundell, Chairman of the Commission, accepted that flight prices would rise as a result of this and other recommendations (climate protection charges, for example), and said "we recognise we have been a privileged generation" (*The Independent* 30/11/02). In many ways, the character of transnational corporeal mobility is finite. Yet populations and economies continue to grow, carrying with them increasing demand for mobility. So, in addition to questions of mobility growth, future research must be concerned with questions of mobility

(re)distribution too. There are some pioneers out there, digging around at this frontier of mobility studies. Urry (2002b) writes favourably of meetings (they minimise privatisation, they expand social capital, they promote economic activity), but expresses concern that, increasingly, meetings entail travel which is unevenly accessed. He writes of mobility-exclusion and hard choices regarding who should get to travel and thus to meet. Eriksen (2001) argues that, in the information age, the fast time of e-mail, mobile telephones, the Internet, multi-channel television, flexible work, stress, impatience etc. squeezes out the slow time (the continuous time, the linear time, the cumulative time) of thoughtful letters, long-term ideology, meandering philosophy, nuanced statement, creativity, the family, trust etc. He writes of access to fast time as the issue of the moment for some people (prison inmates, the unemployed, the impoverished, the marginalised). And he writes of access to slow time as the issue of the moment for other people (high-flying academics, for example).

In addition to this emerging literature on rights to mobility, fixity, fast time, and slow time, the view from here contains another emerging literature on travelling mindsets and tourism of the everyday. One means of confronting the problem of mobility (re)distribution is to think in terms of inclusion, exclusion, hard choices, and rights. Another is to rethink and reinscribe the more or less attractive character of mobility itself. Again, we can identify pioneers at the frontier. De Botton (2002) concludes *The Art of Travel* with a discussion of de Maistre's *Journey around My Bedroom*. He writes "De Maistre's work springs from a profound and suggestive insight: that the pleasure we derive from journeys is perhaps dependent more on the mindset with which we travel than on the destination we travel to" (p246). He continues (pp246-7):

What, then, is a travelling mindset? Receptivity might be said to be its chief characteristic. We approach new places with humility. We carry with us no rigid ideas about what is interesting. We irritate locals because we stand on traffic islands and in narrow streets and admire what they take to be strange small details. We risk getting run over because we are intrigued by the roof of a government building or an inscription on the wall. We find a supermarket or hairdresser's unusually fascinating. We dwell at length on the layout of a menu or the clothes of the presenter on the evening news. We are alive to the layers of history beneath the present and take notes and photographs.



That tourism need not involve escape from work, home, and the everyday lifeworld to resorts and destinations on the social margin is also the position of Franklin (2003). Modern life is not dull, repetitive or meaningless. Rather, it is rapidly changing, abundant with new things, characterised by novelty. For Franklin, tourism is the quintessential expression and performance of modern life. It is infused or blended into the everyday. Most leisure activities are touristic (e.g. surfing the web). Most places are touristic (i.e. full of different commodities, musics, foods, styles). I am not sure that I like the 'pioneer at the frontier' figure, but I very much hope to be involved in these two areas of future research: writing mobility in terms of rights; and writing mobility in terms of travelling mindsets and tourism of the everyday.

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**APPENDIX A**

**STOCK ESTIMATE OR SNAPSHOT OF WHMS IN AUSTRALIA, TAKEN JUNE 30 1996-2001, USING THE TRAVEL AND IMMIGRATION PROCESSING SYSTEM (TRIPS) AT DIMIA**

**All WHMs by country of citizenship 1996-2001**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% change 1996-2001
Britain	13631	15711	17966	18219	23351	23338	+71
Canada	1805	1715	1863	2006	2809	2751	+52
Denmark	101	121	44	21	30	14	-86
Finland	1	2	5	6	8	3	+200
Germany	38	62	52	23	87	1442	+3695
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	0	2	1	1	2	1	-
Ireland	3651	5358	6025	6921	9015	8744	+139
Japan	3785	6311	6244	5601	5925	6506	+72
Korea (Republic of, South)	411	1151	810	1007	1053	1277	+211
Malta	0	21	21	17	31	28	-
Netherlands	1264	1524	1692	1905	2089	2263	+79
Norway	2	0	1	1	2	2	0
Sweden	4	2	14	5	33	19	+375
Total	25093	32550	35160	36167	45264	46627	+86

Note: Total includes a small number of WHMs from non-arrangement countries (legislation denying citizens from non-arrangement countries application rights without exception only came into force July 2000).

**WHMs by country of citizenship and gender 2001**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total
Britain	12431 (53)	10906 (47)	23338
Canada	1225 (45)	1526 (55)	2751
Germany	554 (38)	888 (62)	1442
Ireland	4342 (50)	4402 (50)	8744
Japan	2500 (38)	4006 (62)	6506
Korea (Republic of, South)	611 (48)	666 (52)	1277
Netherlands	1149 (51)	1114 (49)	2263
Total	22812 (49)	23508 (51)	46321

Note: Countries listed are those with which arrangements had been made prior to 2001

**All WHMs by gender 1996-2001**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% change 1996-2001
Male	12690	16138	16896	17904	21891	22954	+81
Female	12403	16412	18264	18263	23373	23673	+91
Total	25093	32550	35160	36167	45264	46627	+86



**British WHMs by gender 1996-2001**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% change 1996-2001
Male	7387	8349	9350	9626	12063	12432	+68
Female	6244	7362	8616	8593	11288	10906	+75
Total	13631	15711	17966	18219	23351	23338	+71

**WHMs by country of citizenship and age 2001**

	18-24 (%)	25-30 (%)	Other (%)	Total
Britain	13680 (59)	9051 (39)	607 (3)	23338
Canada	1918 (70)	800 (29)	33 (1)	2751
Germany	787 (55)	616 (43)	39 (3)	1442
Ireland	4677 (53)	3931 (45)	136 (2)	8744
Japan	3284 (51)	3062 (47)	160 (2)	6506
Korea (Republic of, South)	637 (50)	635 (50)	5 (0)	1277
Netherlands	1447 (64)	793 (35)	23 (1)	2263
Total	26430 (57)	18888 (41)	1003 (2)	46321

Note: Countries listed are those with which arrangements had been made prior to 2001

Note: Legislation denying people over 30 years application rights without exception only came into force July 2000.

**All WHMs by age 1996-2001**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% change 1996-2001
18-24	16593	20699	21237	21755	26863	26587	+60
25-30	8368	11642	13568	13987	17811	19032	+127
Other	132	209	355	425	590	1008	+664
Total	25093	32550	35160	36167	45264	46627	+86

Note: Legislation denying people over 30 years application rights without exception only came into force July 2000.

**British WHMs by age 1996-2001**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% change 1996-2001
18-24	9136	9934	10658	10789	13522	13680	+50
25-30	4420	5644	7045	7102	9370	9051	+105
Other	75	133	263	328	459	607	+709
Total	13631	15711	17966	18219	23351	23338	+71

Note: Legislation denying people over 30 years application rights without exception only came into force July 2000.

**APPENDIX B**

**CORPORATE INTERVIEWEES**

Individual	Organisation
Michael Burns	Australian High Commission, London
Charlotte Hindle	Lonely Planet, London
Steve Hankinson	YHA Adventure Shops, Bristol
Rachel Jeavoms	Austravel, Bristol
Chris Dorrian, Olivia Shepherd	Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra
James Parker, Lance Batty	TNT Magazine, Sydney
Mark Williams, Cathy Hanan	The Word: Backpacking Australia, Sydney
Julian Ledger	YHA NSW, Sydney
Alan Collingwood, Tim Anderson	Travellers Contact Point, Sydney
Alan Graham	Randwick City Council, Sydney
Leanne Johnson, Vjek Bradaric	Bureau of Tourism Research, Canberra
Harmut Finke	Sydney Central YHA, Sydney
Tony Barrington	Recruitment Solutions, Sydney
Michelle Maye	Worldwide Workers, Sydney
Maureen Smeltzer	Allcare Nursing Service, Sydney
Olivia Jenkins	Tourism Taskforce, Sydney
Annette Edwards	Free Spirit, Sydney

APPENDIX C

WHM INTERVIEWEES

Site of interview	Sydney	Maroopna	Cairns	UK	Total
Gender					
Male	11	11		11	6
Female	11111	111	111	11	13
Age					
18-21 years		1			1
22-27 years	1111	1111	111	1111	15
28-31 years	111				3
Crude education					
University (has been/will go)	111111	1111	111	111	16
Other	1	1		1	3
Crude ethnicity					
White	111111	11111	111	1111	18
Other	1				1
Nationality					
British	11111	111	11	1111	14
Dutch	1	1			2
Irish	1	1	1		3
Accommodation (at time of interview)					
Hostel		11111	111		8
Private rented	1111111				7
Stay in Australia (at time of interview)					
0-4 months	1	111	111		7
5-8 months	111	11			5
9-12 months	111				3
Total	7	5	3	4	19

APPENDIX D

WHM INTERVIEW GUIDE

Session 1

Before the interview

Venue			
Date/time			
How we met/our relationship			
First impressions			
Sydney		Cairns	
Maroopna		UK	

The interview

Can I record? I guarantee confidentiality but any questions you don't want to answer ...

Introduce me

Me: my year in Oz, Ecotec, PhD Bristol

The project: British working holiday makers in Sydney, ESRC, University of Sydney, research questions (who, why, social and cultural impacts), methods (archives, participant observation, corporate interviews, WHM interviews), publication (conference papers, journal papers)

The two interviews: in the first I want to get you to introduce yourself, to talk about why you're here on the WH programme, and to talk about your experience thus far. I then want to give you a bunch of paper, and ask you to make a list of everything you brought with you and everything you've acquired here, and to keep a diary from tomorrow for one week recording everything you do against time (where you go, what you see, who you speak to, what you spend). Then in the second interview, we'll look through the diary and talk about the backpacker community in Sydney and, more generally, about the city itself. And I can also give you a transcription of the first interview to look at, to check it meets with your approval. OK?

**Introduce you**

Male		Income	
Female		Highest educational qualification	
White		Duration of schooling	
Other (details)		Highest educational qualification of father	
British		Highest educational qualification of mother	
Other (details)		Highest educational qualification of paternal grandfather	
18-21 years old		Highest educational qualification of maternal grandfather	
22-27		Hostel	
28-31		Private rented	
Most recent place of residence (time lived there)		0-4 months in Oz	
Previous/long-term place of residence (time lived there)		5-8 months	
Occupation, trade, profession		9-12 months	
Father's occupation		0-4 months in Sydney	
Mother's occupation		5-8 months	
Paternal Grandfather's occupation		9-12 months	
Maternal Grandfather's occupation			

**Some general questions to start**

Where have you been in Oz? Is there anywhere else you plan to go? Why Sydney at this stage/time of year?

Do you use a guidebook? How do you use it?

Which travel agent did you use? What services did you buy from it? Did you use the services of any other companies before you left?

What work are you doing here? Is it the same kind of work you usually do at home? What do you think about working whilst here, what does it mean to you, what function does it perform?

Are you a typical WHM?

**Why are you here?**

What do you describe yourself as at present? What do you describe what you're doing this year as being?

Why are you here? Think back to the very first time you thought of coming. Where did that idea come from?

Why Australia and not somewhere else? What does it offer you? What do you hope to find here?

Is it all about Australia or were things happening or lacking in the UK important to?

Is Australia the key here or is it just one stopover on a round-the-world trip?

Were you worried about leaving your job in the UK?

Do you think this year will help or hinder as far as your career goes? How do employers view the working holiday? What about family and friends?

What are your expectations for this year? Where do you think these expectations have come from?

Do you think there's a proper or accepted way to do the working holiday? Do you feel under pressure to do certain things, go to certain places, behave in certain ways out here? Where do these pressures come from? And do you bow to these pressures or not?

Are your ambitions limited to this visa year? What happens at the end of the 12 months?

Who encouraged you to come? Did anyone discourage you?

Do you have family or friends over here?

What else might have influenced your decision? Where else might you have got information about Australia from? What have you watched or read?

What things make this easy for you to leave home and move to the other side of the world for a year?

Can anyone do this? Do you need to be ready, with certain skills, to complete a successful trip? Why were you ready, how did you come to have these skills?

Just to play devil's advocate, why not a three week holiday? Or even, why not just stay at home and visit Oz through TV or websites?

### **A few quick questions**

Did you give any thought to exchange rates?

Did you pay much attention to the Sydney Olympic games?

What did you think about September 11th as regards travel?

Did you encounter any problems in doing this, any barriers?

### **What's your experience been thus far?**

What have you done? What have you seen? Why these things?

What have been the highs for you? And the lows?

Do you think your views about anything, your outlook, have changed at all since leaving the UK?

Where's home for you? What does it mean to you at present, what makes it home, when you think of home what do you think of? Do you have the same attachment now to home and the UK you had before you left?

Is there anything you do to do/stay being British whilst in Oz?

Are there any things you do to cope with being away from home?

What have you got out of it so far? What have you got to show for it?

Do you think you've learnt about or got to know Australia in your time here? Where have you got your information about Australia from whilst here?

I've been asking you a lot of questions about your self. Is your self something you've given a lot of thought to since you left England? More than usual? Has this been a formal (diary keeping etc.) or informal process?

What physical evidence do you have for what you've done? What things will you take home with you?

Are there any ways in which you've behaved differently here from at home? Why? What's different?

Has your experience in Sydney been different from elsewhere in Oz? Has your experience these last few weeks been different from other times in Oz?

I've been asking you questions about change. What hasn't changed since leaving the UK?

So what were your expectations again? Have they been met? Any disappointments?

What happens when you go home? Where do you go? What do you do?

### **Au revoir**

We'll meet again

Do me the lists and diary

What else might help me (people to speak to – can they give me my next subject? – things to read or look at – address books, CVs, travel journals, letters/e-mails home, photo albums)?

### **And after**

How much distance did I need to travel to reach the interviewees position?

Body language?

How did my presence affect him/her?

How did they affect me?

Do I trust them? Did I get stranger talk?

In transcription: how was stuff said (when were they off-hand, serious, fervent)?

## **Session 2**

### **First things first**

Have they done the diary for me? (then go through it and check I understand everything)

I've brought the transcript for them (read it later and get back to me with any thoughts – my e-mail address will be on the bottom)

### **The WHM community**

Is there anything that unites WHMs? Is there anything that divides them? Are there identifiable types of WHM? How are they identifiable?

Is there a WHM community you can belong to here? How does it work, how do you become a part of it?

Tell me about the hostels and houses you've been in since arriving? What are the advantages and disadvantages of hostel/shared house living?



How do you go about getting some privacy in hostels/houses? How do you go about making these places your home?

When with other WHMs, are there norms or unwritten rules regulating behaviour? How must you behave to get on with WHMs? What mustn't you do or say? Are there WHM taboos? Do you break them? What happens if you do?

Do all WHMs get on? How would you describe the relationships you've formed with other WHMs? Have you got close to people? How do you know to trust people you've only just met people, what do you look for? How do you get them to trust you?

Is there a hierarchy among WHMs, with dominant and less dominant groups? Who wields power? Over whom? Is there confrontation? Over what?

Do you Brits mix with other nationalities?

And is there anyone at all you don't mix with? Do WHMs have enemies, people you avoid?

### **Sydney more generally**

Where do you live in Sydney? Why that suburb?

Where do you go in Sydney, where do you spend most of your time? Which places are important to you? Why these places? How do you get about?

Do you feel free to use Sydney as you please? Are there any places you wouldn't go?

Who do you hang around with here? Which people are important to you?

How much contact do you have with Sydney and Sydneysiders?

How do you get on with the locals? Are you close to any of them? Any problems?

### **Wrap up**

Repeat right to reply – ensure we've both got contact details for future ref.

Thank you

**APPENDIX E**  
**WHM DIARY GUIDE**

Tasks to be completed for Session 2, arranged for ..... (date) at .....  
(time) at ..... (venue) (please contact me on 9516 3968 or at  
n.clarke@bristol.ac.uk with any problems or queries)

1. Please list all items you arrived in Australia with (e.g. passport, sleeping bag, photo of  
parents ...)

2. Please list all items you've acquired since arriving in Australia (e.g. sunhat, phone  
card, tent ...)

3. Please fill out the attached one-week diary

BRISTOL  
CITY  
LIBRARY

SUNDAY				
Time	Activity	Venue	Contact	Transactions
Early morning	e.g. slept, checked e-mails, had breakfast, went swimming	Glebe Point YHA, Bad Manners café, Victoria Park pool	Received and replied to e-mail from Mum (at home in London). Met John from Canada at breakfast	Paid hostel next weeks rent. Paid café for breakfast. Paid entrance to pool.
1100				
1300				
1500				
1700				
1900				
2100				
Late night				